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“My hunt for a **Nazi war criminal**”

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TEMPLARS ON TRIAL

Why the medieval knights were accused of debauchery and devil worship

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“In 1307 the world of the **Knights Templar** came crashing down. Targeted by the pope and the kings of France and England, they were arrested, interrogated, tried, tortured, and – in many cases – executed. But what was behind this savage attack on the military-religious order? Were the Templars really guilty of the vicious charges they were accused of? In our cover feature this month (page 22), historian Steve Tibble looks back at the trials to consider the strengths – and weaknesses – of the case against them.

While (spoiler alert) the Templars were often tried for crimes they hadn't committed, the opposite was the case in the aftermath of the Second World War. Although some senior Nazis were brought to justice, the vast majority never faced the consequences of their actions. One of the most notorious examples is **Josef Mengele, the sadistic 'doctor' of Auschwitz** who fled to South America in the late 1940s. Though Mengele ultimately evaded justice, attempts *were* made to locate him, and on page 35 we've interviewed Gerald Posner who embarked on a mission to track him down in the 1980s.

Finally, I've never sought to disguise my identity as the author of this Editor's Letter, but many of the most fascinating – and disturbing – epistles from history **were written anonymously**. In her feature on page 40, Emily Cockayne analyses a selection of these from the past 150 years, revealing a long history behind the online trolling of today.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar
Editor



THREE THINGS I'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

1. My timbers shivered

I found the scale of east Asian piracy revealed in Adam Clulow's piece this month to be quite staggering. For instance, one pirate leader had more than 17,000 pirates under her command in the early 19th century (page 61).

2. Smell you earlier

In this month's Q&A (page 55), I was surprised to discover that deodorant only became commonplace around 100 years ago, and swiftly cancelled my plans to build a time machine.

3. Man of the people

Our feature on the real story of Dick Whittington is full of interesting details, including the fact that the medieval mayor left his entire fortune (around £7m in today's terms) to charity (page 52).



THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Sophie Hay

"I continually find myself walking through the streets of Pompeii, so I've become fascinated by the rich archaeological evidence that can reveal the vibrancy of Roman life that took place along them." **Sophie reveals the secrets of the perfectly preserved streets of Rome's doomed city on page 28**



Gerald Posner

"Whether you're a social justice lawyer or an investigative journalist, nothing gets you quite as focused as the idea that some evildoer has not just gotten away with it, but is enjoying the spoils of what they did – and that was certainly the case with Josef Mengele." **Gerald reflects on his hunt for Mengele on page 35**



Emily Cockayne

"An investigation of anonymous letters involves a lot of sleuthing, but it reveals rich and intriguing details about past communities and the various ways people related to others." **Emily considers what anonymous hate mail can tell us about our changing society on page 40**



Jonathan Sumption

"The Hundred Years' War was a complete war in the sense that we are not just looking at armies marching to and fro. We are looking at the efforts of an entire population, even if they were not directly affected by it." **Jonathan discusses the concluding years of the pivotal medieval conflict on page 66**

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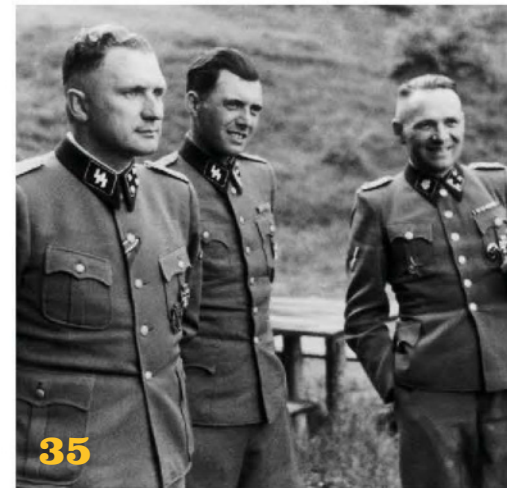
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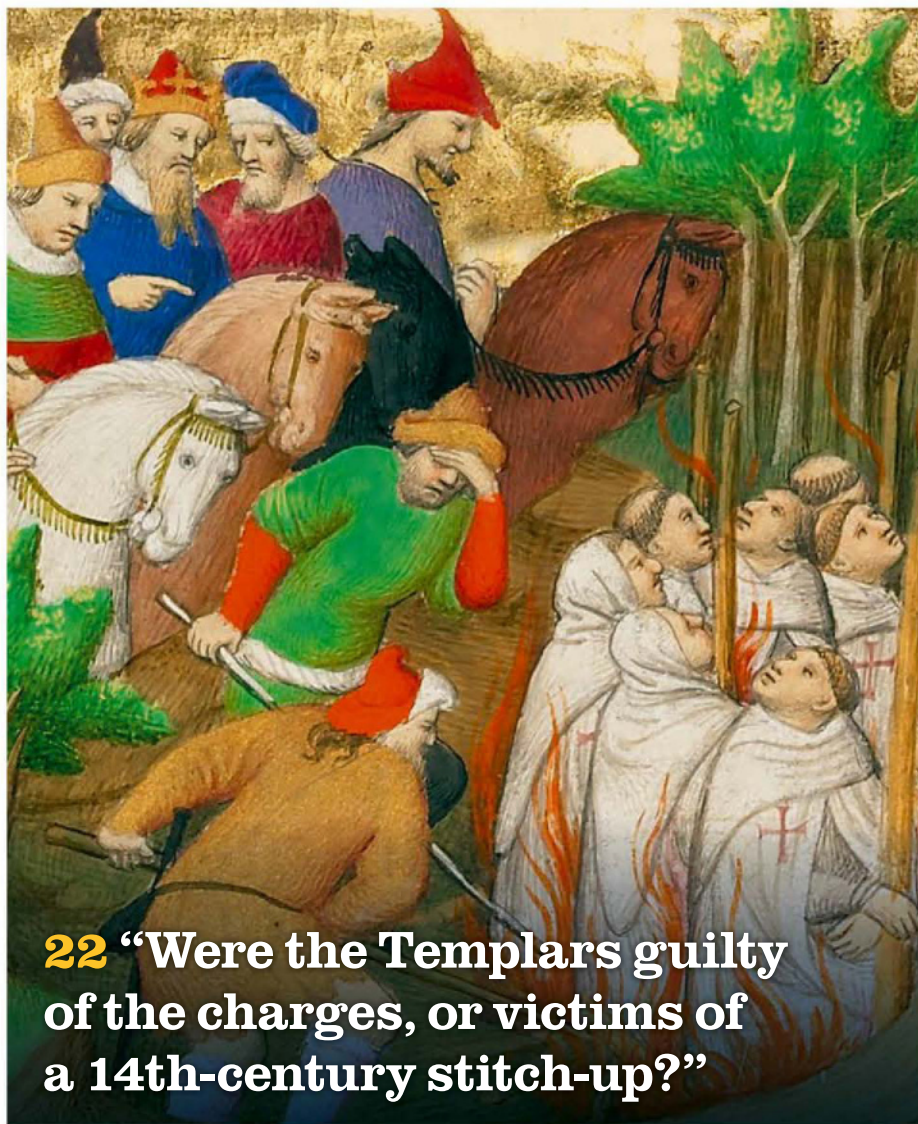
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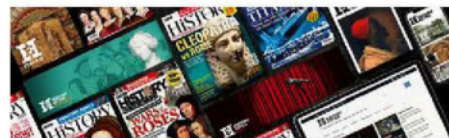
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ANNIVERSARIES

HELEN CARR highlights events that took place in October in history

26 OCTOBER 1892

Ida B Wells publishes her research into lynching

The horrors of racist murders are revealed

Extrajudicial killings, predominantly of black men by white mobs, were a horrific scourge of the US South in the 19th century. Such episodes were widely decried in the north – but still they continued.

One woman was determined to publicise and end these racist murders. Born into slavery in Mississippi in 1862, Ida B Wells became a pioneering journalist and civil rights leader. Investigating the appalling litany of lynching cases, she noticed that many were ‘revenge crimes’ perpetrated after the alleged rapes of white women. She also saw that many such claims were false, used by white southerners to justify violence against black men. The real reasons for such attacks ranged from envy of economic progress by black people to simple racist aggression.

Wells published her groundbreaking research on 26 October 1892 in a pamphlet titled *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases*, launching a large-scale campaign against lynching. She travelled widely, and visited Britain in 1893 and 1894, hoping to gain support from British progressives. In her homeland she was slandered as a “nasty minded Mulatress”, but she succeeded in raising awareness in the post-eman-cipation US. Finally, in 2020 she posthumously received a Pulitzer Prize for her courageous crusade.

Ida B Wells, the investigative journalist whose work did so much to highlight the horrors of lynching

Edward the Confessor's shrine in Westminster Abbey, erected two centuries after his death



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

The title page
of the groundbreaking
Coverdale Bible



4 OCTOBER 1535

The **Coverdale Bible** – the first complete Bible in English – is published, adding to William Tynedale's New Testament of 1525. In 1536, Tynedale will be executed for heresy.

13 OCTOBER 1269

Edward the Confessor moves to a splendid new shrine

Henry III's rebuilt Westminster Abbey is finally consecrated

Westminster Abbey was a sensory overload on 13 October 1269, bursting with the sounds, smells and colours of song, incense and regalia. This day was designed to mark the crowning moment – if not the end – of a project that had dominated much of the life of Henry III: the consecration of his new Westminster Abbey, rebuilt to honour the cult of his predecessor, Saint Edward the Confessor.

That pious king had founded a great abbey near London, dedicated in 1065 just before his death. Henry wanted to stamp his mark on the site, and in 1245 work began on a huge new Gothic structure – the focal point of which would be a monumental new shrine for the Confessor, made of Purbeck marble and adorned with mosaics and a Latin inscription crediting Henry.

By 1269, the new church wasn't complete – but the shrine was ready to receive the remains of the long-dead Edward. As if a funerary event, a cortège carried a large chest containing the relics through the cloisters. Henry, his brother Richard and his sons Edward and Edmund, together with important nobility, processed towards the high altar. There, a spectacular, brightly painted coffin awaited its cadaver.

Once their precious cargo was inside the coffin, the cortège moved on, sweeping over the intricately designed 'Great Pavement' on which future monarchs would be crowned. Assembled bishops jostled for prime positions at the main event: the moment of re-interment. After the saint was placed inside his new tomb, a heavy golden feretory (portable shrine) was placed on top, concealing the remains of one of England's most revered saints.

This act was designed to propel Westminster Abbey into the highest echelons of religious houses, perhaps even rivalling the prestige of Canterbury, which held the relics of Thomas Becket. And Henry was successful in his mission: the shrine came to be flanked by the tombs of medieval kings, and has been a place of pilgrimage and fascination to this day.

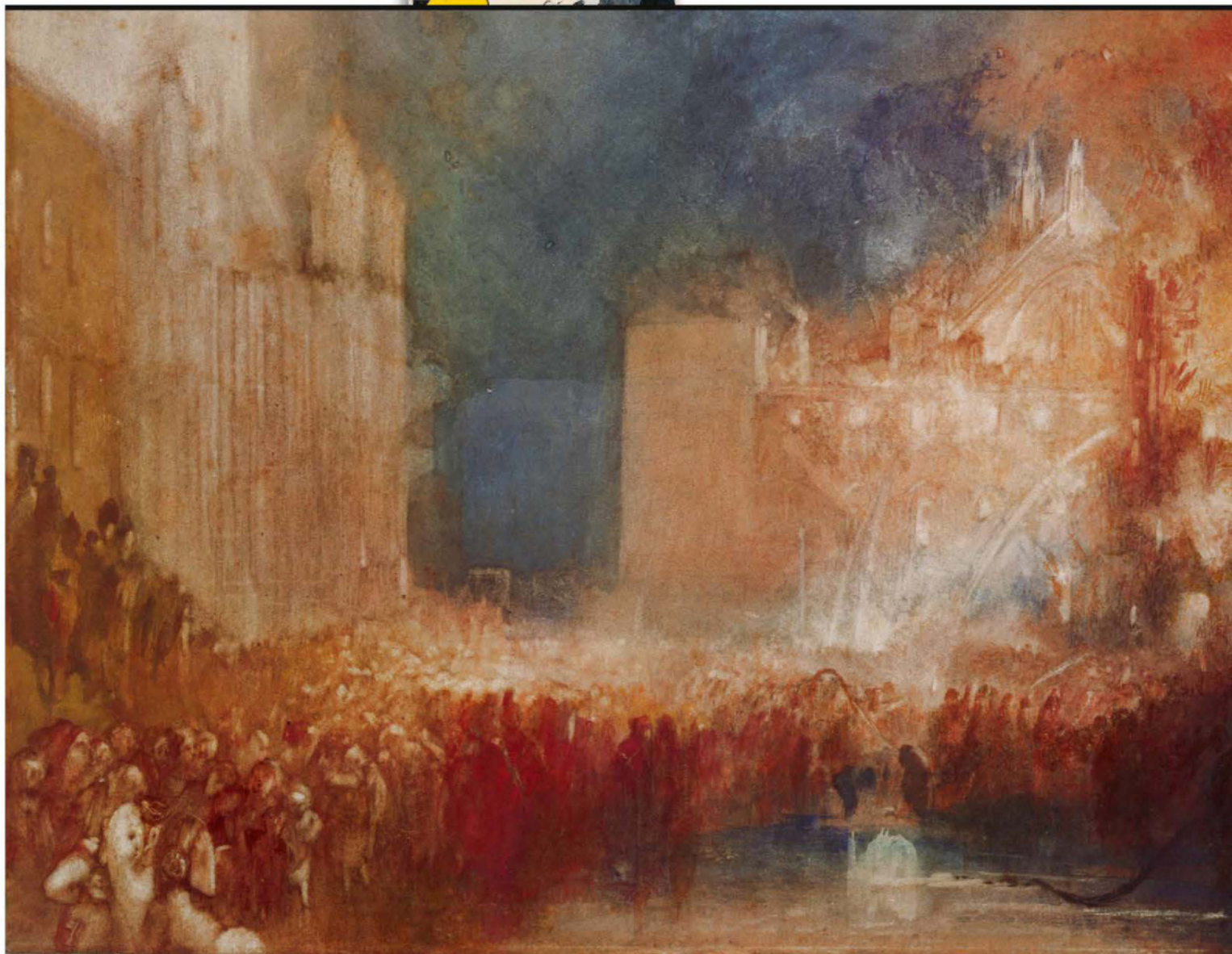


One of the posters created by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec to promote the Moulin Rouge



6 OCTOBER 1889

The Moulin Rouge opens in Paris, topped by the red windmill that gives this famously risqué cabaret its name. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is commissioned to produce a series of posters advertising the venue.



16 OCTOBER 1834

The Palace of Westminster is ravaged by fire

Discarded wooden sticks spark a blaze that destroys important medieval buildings

By the early 19th century, wooden tally sticks had become an antiquated form of financial records. So when cart loads of such sticks were discovered at the Old Palace of Westminster on 16 October 1834, they were deemed obsolete. The clerk of the works gave instructions to two workmen to dispose of them in the basement of the House of Lords, where two underfloor stoves could be lit for the purpose.

That afternoon, a party of visitors who were being shown around the House of Lords remarked that the floor felt very hot, and voiced their concern that smoke was creeping through gaps in the floorboards. The workmen reassured them that there was no cause for alarm. At 5pm, at the end of the

working day, the building was duly closed and Mrs Wright, the housekeeper, locked the premises as usual.

An hour later, the screams of a doorkeeper's wife alerted those in the vicinity to the blaze that was by then starting to engulf the House of Lords. Flames tore through the medieval passageways and rooms as the fire spread rapidly, with old and decrepit timber catching alight like dry kindling. Crowds streamed out of surrounding buildings to witness the devastation, while soldiers who had been mobilised in great haste struggled to hold them back. The inferno soon consumed the spectacular medieval palace that loomed over the Thames, its soaring flames reflected in the water.

3 OCTOBER 1929

The Balkan state comprising the kingdoms of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is officially renamed the **Kingdom of Yugoslavia**, after being formally recognised on 13 July 1922 at the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris.



JMW Turner's painting of the Palace of Westminster after the fire of 1834. Some onlookers, including Turner, hired boatmen to take them out for a better view of the blaze

The ideal place to watch the disaster unfurl was on the river, and voyeurs paid boatmen to take them to the best spots. One such onlooker was the artist JMW Turner, who produced several frenzied depictions of the Gothic edifice being consumed by furious fire from his viewpoint in a small boat. Turner's work provides the most vivid contemporary impression of the disaster.

Both houses of parliament were destroyed by the blaze, together with a number of medieval outbuildings. The only parts that survived were the Jewel Tower, the Undercroft Chapel, the Cloisters and Chapter House of St Stephen's – and, fortunately for the preservation of medieval history, the inimitable Westminster Hall.

TOPFOTO



Ferdinand and Marie of Romania during their coronation, staged beneath a gilded canopy

15 OCTOBER 1922

King Ferdinand and Queen Marie are crowned in Romania

Queen Victoria's granddaughter is celebrated by her adopted people after raising Romania's global standing

The medieval city of Alba Iulia holds great historical significance in Romania as the site of its union with Transylvania. It was no coincidence, then, that King Ferdinand and Queen Marie were crowned at the newly built Coronation Cathedral there on 15 October 1922, in a lavish ceremony steeped in symbolism.

Their coronation – like all coronations – was heavily political. After the First World War, the Romanian monarchy had overseen a vast expansion of the borders of its kingdom. The driving force behind this land grab was not Ferdinand, though, but Marie. Born into the British royal family – her father was Queen Victoria's second son – she became a huge hit with the Romanian

people following her marriage to Ferdinand in 1893. Her reputation was further enhanced when her diplomatic skills at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 planted Romania firmly at the core of European politics.

Marie's eminence was reflected in the attendees at the coronation, including the future George VI of England, while the crowds of Romanians present were testimony to her popularity with her people. Some 20,000 witnessed Ferdinand plant the specially designed gold Art Nouveau crown on her head beneath a gilded canopy. **II**

Helen Carr is a historian and writer. Her latest book is *The Red Prince* (Oneworld, 2021)



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Michael Wood discusses why the Anglo-Saxons matter

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THE CONVERSATION



ILLUSTRATION BY **HUGH COWLING**

BEHIND THE NEWS

Have nations always used sport to launder their reputations?

As countries with questionable human rights records buy overseas teams and vie to host global tournaments, **MATT MCDOWELL** speaks to Matt Elton about the rise of 'sportswashing' – and whether sport and power have always gone hand in hand

Matt Elton: The term 'sportswashing' has been in the headlines a lot recently. What does it mean?

Matt McDowell: The aims of sportswashing are similar to those of propaganda, public relations and soft power – to launder the reputations of nations, institutions or organisations deemed to have liabilities in terms of human rights, free speech, lack of electoral processes and so on.

Certain nations tend to be accused by western commentators of sportswashing, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Qatar, which famously hosted the 2022 Fifa men's World Cup, has been heavily criticised for its labour rights, LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer] rights, and treatment of migrant workers. It's also bought teams in other countries, such as the French football club Paris Saint-Germain in 2011.

What Saudi Arabia is doing is a bit more ambitious. It bought Newcastle United Football Club in 2021, and last year started a golf league, LIV Golf, to rival the long-established PGA Tour; a merger between the two has since been announced. So its international influence is huge.

The fact that specific nations tend to be accused of sportswashing by the west means that we should be cautious about our use of the term. In the west's rush to judgment of such nations, it's possible to overlook the fact that they may genuinely be aiming to develop domestic sport in an effort to improve public health outcomes – reducing levels of obesity, for instance.

When were the first accusations of sportswashing levelled?

The idea is quite new – the term 'sportswashing' first emerged in the news media in 2015, and it's still much debated in academic circles. But politics has been linked with sport since the games of ancient Greece, when city states put money into hosting contests and helping their athletes win. Much like the

// Victorian industrialists bought grounds and kits for local clubs as a way of aligning themselves with important employees //

modern games, the ancient Greek Olympics were about political positioning as much as sport. So the idea that sport and politics – and, indeed, governments – have a close or even symbiotic relationship isn't new.

When did sport first become connected to image management in the UK?

Modern sports culture developed from the mid-19th century with the foundation of association football, which was a game of the working class in terms of both supporters and players. So in places such as the west of Scotland or Lancashire, local industrialists – cotton mill or textile works owners, for example – might become patrons of local clubs, buying them grounds and kits as a way to align themselves with important employees.

By the 1870s and 80s, though, professionalism in men's football became a problem. Industrialists such as Arnold Hills – founder of what would become West Ham United – and Alexander Wylie of Renton Football Club in west Scotland wanted nothing to do with professional sport. They were believers in sport as a form of self-help and an aid for class mobility. When employees wanted to get paid to play, the dynamic changed. In the end, it was largely unsuccessful as a tool of social control.

I'd like to explore what we can consider 'sportswashing' via a couple of historical examples. For instance, could the label be applied to the 1936 Summer Olympics, held in Berlin under Nazi rule?

I don't think so – at least, not in the way we're using the term

now. That's because when, for instance, Saudi Arabia completed its takeover of Newcastle United FC, the nation itself wasn't referenced in the official team announcement, and the team's games aren't happening in Saudi Arabia. That obviously wasn't the case with the 1936 Olympic Games, in which the Third Reich was visibly present in all aspects. So the influence of sportswashing is more insidious: you don't necessarily think of Saudi Arabia when you see Newcastle United or when you think of golf, for instance.

Some historians have stressed the way in which Britain at the height of its imperial power used cricket to influence how it was regarded in parts of its empire. Can we consider that sportswashing?

Again, I would say not. It *was* reputation laundering, to some extent: the myth of the British empire – which exists to this day – is that sports such as cricket taught fairness and they taught about British democracy. But there is one major difference from sportswashing. Saudi Arabia, to stay with that example, has no occupying armies in the UK. But from the mid-19th century, the British army built cricket pitches at each of their garrisons, meaning the army had a great deal of control over the sport itself. You could argue that colonisation in India was driven by private interests – by the British East India Company – but the army is the institution of the state.

Have certain sports been more prone to sportswashing than others?

There will always be a tendency to look at



Ancient Greek pottery featuring the image of a disc thrower. The uneasy relationship between sport and power can be traced back to such civilisations



Suharto, Indonesia's military dictator, with his wife Siti Hartinah, at Jakarta airport, 1971. The nation hosted international surfing championships during his rule



Construction workers in Qatar board buses after a shift, 2013. The nation's treatment of migrant workers was among the factors that made its hosting of the 2022 World Cup controversial

the big events and most popular sports – Olympic Games, the top tiers of association football or county cricket, top-level athletics and so on. But consider surfing. In the 1960s and 1970s, Indonesia and South Africa saw Australian and American surfers coming to their amazing beaches. At that time, Indonesia was ruled by the brutal dictator Suharto, and South Africa's apartheid regime mandated segregation – so white, black and what were referred to as 'coloured people' could not be on the same beach together. The two nations invited surfers to visit and write glowing articles about how great the surfing was. This was definitely reputation laundering, and would probably fit the definition of sportswashing. And it cost these regimes very little: they paid for the travel and lodging, but hosting is hardly a big thing.

In the 1970s, Rhodesia [the territory that's now Zimbabwe] invited sportspeople and teams from Scotland. Rhodesia was ruled by a white-supremacist government led by Ian Smith, which was absolutely thrilled to host sportspeople. Football clubs such as Clyde and Kilmarnock came, but there was also a focus on sea angling and hockey – another reminder that lots of examples of sports washing came from less high-status sports.

Why is it sport that has been used to further these kinds of political aims, rather than any other arena of society?

I'd argue it's because sport is not viewed as political, but as leisure. And it is leisure: it's a break from everyday life. But, as is the case with any other area of society, it's obviously political too. I'd say that it's that association with pleas-

// The association with pleasure, rather than politics, makes sport a soft target for being used to purchase influence //

ure, rather than politics, that make sport a soft target for being used to purchase political influence.

How have sportspeople and athletes reacted to such tactics?

It depends on where you look. Figures such as [US footballer] Megan Rapinoe and [Manchester United and England player] Marcus Rashford – athletes who are political and take a stand – have in many cases become hugely beloved figures.

There are two factors preventing wider dissent, however. One is that sport, generally speaking, has a close relationship with capitalism in general – particularly in the United States, in which there is no history of people's sport. The major professional sporting clubs in baseball, American football and basketball all began as capitalist enterprises. They were designed to make money. And even relationships with individual athletes tend to be predicated on the idea that you can make money through sport. Becoming rich and building a personal brand are, after all, very much a part of the American dream.

The other problem is that sport, by and large, is very conservative, authoritarian and hierarchical, especially in terms of its governing institutions. Some teams in nations such as Italy or Israel do have radical histories but, on a bigger level, organisations such as football associations, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and World Athletics [formerly IAAF] have long been deeply authoritarian.

The IOC was the brainchild of Pierre de Coubertin, a French aristocrat who saw the modern Olympics not only as a means to prevent modern European empires from clashing on the battlefield, but also, arguably, as a means of excluding professionals – typically working-class men – from sport. And the IAAF president of the interwar years, Sigfrid Edström, also targeted professional sportspeople as well as limiting competitive opportunities for female athletes.

What does exploring this topic tell us about the relationships between sport and power, now and in the past?

Any time you're exploring the relationship between sport and politics, it can tell you a lot about what's really going on in society – in 2023 or in ancient Greece. People love sport more than they love opera. Nobody would question the cultural value of opera, but studying the politics of sport, I think, tells us a great deal more about what's really going on in all levels of society. **H**



Matt McDowell is lecturer in sport policy, management and international development at the University of Edinburgh



Run of the mill Workers at a Lancashire cotton mill, 1910. People with learning disabilities worked in factories as well as in hospitals, workshops and public-facing service-sector jobs

NEW RESEARCH

"My historical research shows that **much higher levels of inclusion** are possible for people labelled disabled"

A new study by historian **LUCY DELAP** suggests we need to rethink the experiences of people with learning disabilities in the 20th century. Here she explains how many thrived in work and wider society

Many histories of people with learning disabilities focus on segregation. But although in the 19th and early 20th centuries there was a push to move them into asylums, that never affected the majority. Most lived outside such institutions and had to work. Historians haven't looked much at lives in the community – yet that represented most people with learning disabilities.

My research covered most of the 20th century, until its closing decades saw major economic changes caused by deindustrialisation and the rise of new forms of work associated with computers, and new expectations of school qualifications. Those things had a real impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities, increasingly cutting them out of labour opportunities.

Until relatively recently, broad definitions included terms we wouldn't use today, such as 'mental deficiency' or 'handicap'. Those encompassed all kinds of cognitive impairments as well as those whose lives just didn't quite fit the mould – troubled adolescents, people involved in petty crime, or those deemed promiscuous. Indeed, young women who got pregnant outside marriage were sometimes called 'moral imbeciles'. We wouldn't recognise those people today as having any kind of learning disability.

Employment rates among people with learning disabilities varied between about 40 and 70 per cent in the first half of the 20th century. It was quite gendered: men were much more likely to be in paid employment

than women, who tended to do housework or informal childcare. These numbers were very high compared to today, when fewer than 5 per cent of people with learning disabilities are employed.

There's lots of evidence to suggest that, in the past, people we would recognise as having learning difficulties were successfully integrated into paid employment. That spanned different sectors – factories, workshops, extractive industries, the steel industry, and service-sector jobs with public contact. They weren't all stuck in a cupboard somewhere, putting things in boxes or bags. Some were, but others were digging graves, sweeping the streets, emptying bins and working in hospitals doing low-level nursing jobs.

Some were fairly well-paid, and even founded their own businesses. Certainly, some were stuck permanently on the very lowest entry-level wages doing very boring work, and few had roles that required professional qualifications, but there was an amazingly broad spectrum of employment.

I'm fascinated by a man who called himself Hugh McGowan, though he appears under a number of other names in the archive. He fought in the First World War, but had a chequered time in the army: he was disciplined several times, so wasn't a perfect soldier. He was injured in battle, invalided out and sought a military pension, but doctors said he didn't qualify because he had a pre-existing disability – they termed him 'backward' or 'mentally defective'. He contested that decision, writing lots of letters from 1921 right up to 1963, when he was 89.

In them, McGowan describes his life – and it wasn't an easy life, because he existed

// This is not a niche subject. It's estimated that one in five people are living with a disability at any one time //

right on the economic margins. When he had enough money, he would buy goods and sell them on for a fractional profit. He was convicted of theft, having stolen boots, bacon and other petty items, as well as being drunk and disorderly. So he repeatedly came to the attention of the authorities – though, he claimed in one of his letters, the authorities had “got me all rong”. He was employed in various roles: shovelling coal, working in a power station, even as a fisherman – and he was very proud of never having claimed any kind of unemployment benefit.

His is an example of the amazing diversity of experiences of people labelled and othered by the authorities, but who lived quite independently of systems of care and control.

I'm not suggesting there was a golden age for people with learning disabilities, because they did encounter stigma and hardship. Many found economic niches, but often had to struggle to maintain them, and to assert their right to citizenship and participation.

One interesting shift came in the 1950s, when ideas of resource management, human resources and productivity came to the fore. When attempts were made to modernise and improve efficiency in British

workplaces, it became harder for people with learning disabilities to find their economic niche and to keep up with the pressure to gain educational qualifications. In the second half of the 20th century, when everyone had the right to attend secondary school and when the wages of school leavers rose, those who didn't have those educational opportunities – who didn't go to school, or were in the special school system – suffered because they emerged without qualifications. And as more and more British young people gained school qualifications, and employers increasingly expected them, it became harder to get a job.

People in asylums or hospitals also worked. They might work on licence for a local farmer, or in the wards of the hospital itself. So work experiences spanned segregated institutional lives as well as people in the wider community.

There is a wonderful memoir by David Barron – one of just a few written by people with intellectual disabilities. Born in 1925, he was fostered, and then, in his teens, placed in ‘mental deficiency institutions’, where he worked his socks off in fairly menial and quite exploitative jobs. He wasn't paid, or only in trivial ways – a sixpence or some chocolate. But when he finally got out of those institutions, he was very proactive in finding work. He loved watching films, and got a position in a cinema, helping the projectionist. He absolutely knew the value of having a job, and was able to navigate that on his own.

My research reveals a hopeful, optimistic story of resilience, of disabled people who were able to gain inclusion, to support themselves, to make meaningful lives and to develop and market their skills.

Disability history should be mainstream. It's not a niche subject: an estimated 20 per cent of the population is living with a disability at any one time, and of course lots of people will move into or out of that category as their life circumstances change.

My research shows that much higher levels of inclusion are possible for people who are stigmatised or labelled disabled. Rather than believing the history of disabled people to be just one of pain, shame and exclusion, we can look back at the past and see that such people worked widely across different sectors. So we should challenge ourselves to ask: how could we make that possible again in the 21st century? **H**

Lucy Delap is professor in modern British and gender history at the University of Cambridge. Her research is published in the *Social History of Medicine* journal

Nero's Theatre unearthed near Vatican

Archaeologists working on excavations in preparation for a new hotel in Rome believe they have uncovered the first-century remains of Nero's Theatre. This venue was mentioned in texts by Pliny the Elder, a contemporary of the emperor, but its location was long unknown – until digs in the gardens of the 15th-century Palazzo della Rovere near St Peter's Square uncovered evidence of such a site. Among the finds is gold-leaf-decorated plaster, as well as later artefacts including 10th-century glass goblets.



Archaeological excavations at this site in Rome have uncovered what may be an ancient theatre

Pet pooch found at Oxfordshire Roman villa

The remains of a small dog that died around 1,800 years ago are among finds unearthed during excavations at Wittenham Clumps. These hillocks in Oxfordshire are the site of an Iron Age fort and a later Roman villa. Examination of the canine bones indicate they belonged to a tiny dog with bowed legs, suggesting a Roman family pet rather than a hunting animal. Other items discovered at the dig include a decorative brooch and copper bracelet.

X-rays reveal hidden Bonnie Prince Charlie portrait

A previously unknown depiction of Charles Edward Stuart has been discovered beneath a portrait of the unsuccessful claimant to the English, Scottish and Irish thrones. Analysis commissioned by art historian Bendor Grosvenor detected an earlier, less accomplished work likely dating from 1746 – a year after the Jacobite uprising – and later heavily touched up to make the ‘Young Pretender’ more appealing to a Scottish audience. It's on display in Fort William's West Highland Museum until December. **H**



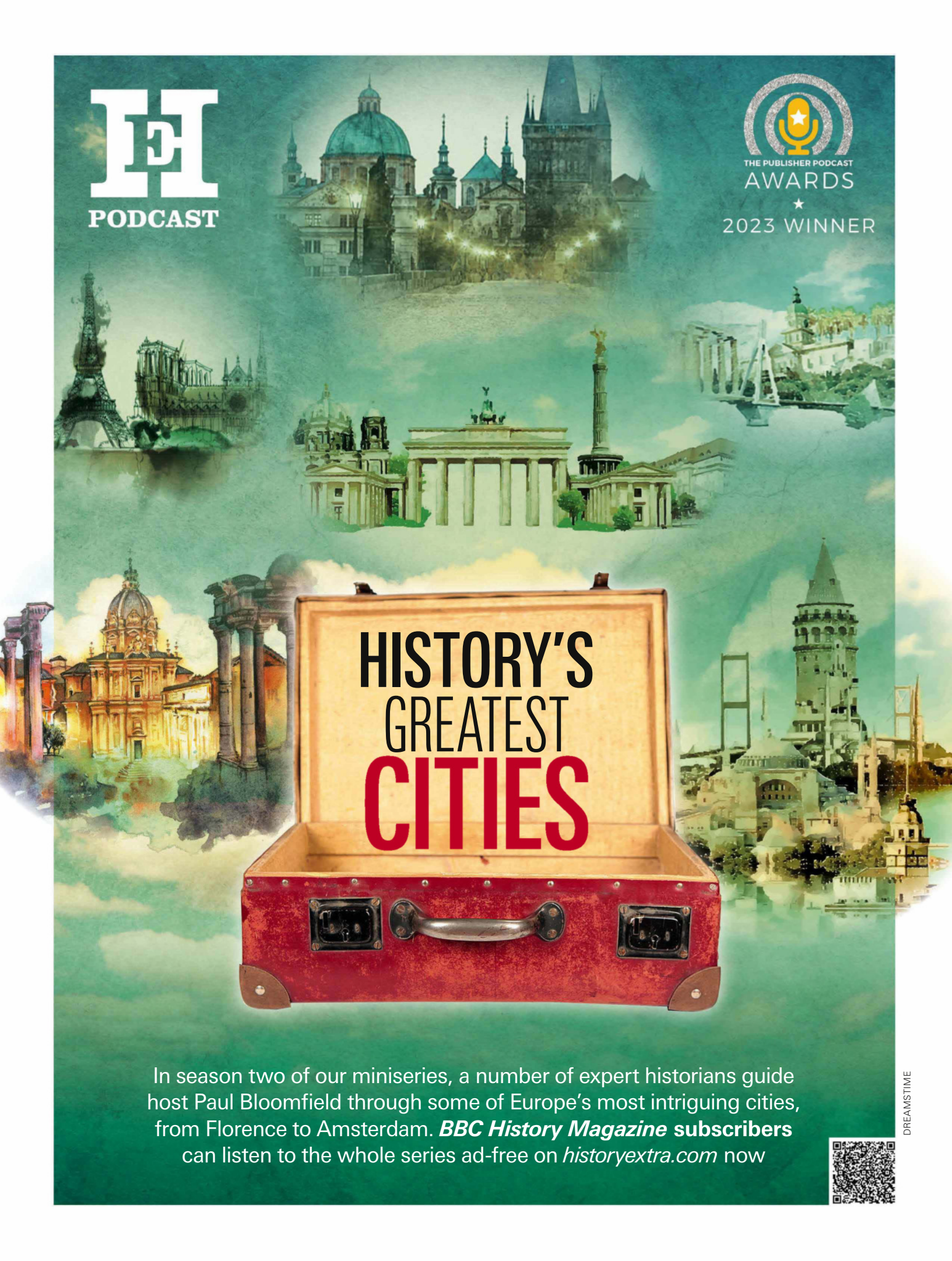
A science class, 1956. From that decade, people with learning disabilities found it harder to compete with the growing numbers gaining educational qualifications

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MICHAEL WOOD ON... SLAVERY'S ONGOING LEGACY

// Slavery's effects are still working themselves out in our lives today //

SOMETIMES AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND CAN open a window onto the past so vivid, so immediate, that it comes like a flash of lightning.

This summer, a discovery was made at an archaeological dig in the small town of Abandze on the coast of Ghana, 70 miles west of Accra. The dig was inside the ruins of Fort Amsterdam, built by the Dutch in the 17th century on a hill above a beach fringed with coconut palms, where Atlantic rollers crash and painted fishing boats with long, curved prows bob in the surf. The fort was a brutalist rectangle with circular and square corner towers, and for more than 200 years it was used for the slave trade. But now, under its earth floor, traces have been uncovered of an earlier fort built by the British from 1638.

The first British entrepôt anywhere in Africa, it bore a famous name, Cormantin. At first it was used for trading gold, ivory and exotica, but then its commerce became people. In 1663, King Charles II granted a charter to the Company of Royal Adventurers (later the Royal African Company), giving it monopoly rights over the slave trade in which Britain would become a key mover. The exact site was long uncertain, but now here it was.

Under the earth were a wall, a brick drain, a gun flint, broken bits of 17th-century tobacco pipes, the spouts and necks of glazed tableware. Everyday fragments from one of history's greatest crimes. The find took me back nearly 40 years. Back then, I was making a series that told a slavery story – pioneering in those days, when Britain's

role in emancipation was the thing that was stressed.

We were looking at a group of Afro-Caribbean families in Leicester who had come to the UK in the 1950s from the island of Barbuda, a desolate, almost waterless place north of Antigua. From the late 1600s till emancipation, and after, the island was owned by the Codrington family (who founded the All Souls College Library in Oxford, and built a grand country estate at Dodington Park in Gloucestershire). The tiny island was later part of the British Leeward Island Federation and eventually became independent in 1981. But in the 1950s, in the wake of the *Windrush*, many Barbudan families migrated to Leicester, which was the hometown of the English parish priest on Barbuda, a Father Milburn. They are still there today.

The thing that distinguishes the Barbudan story is the Codrington archive: the single most important archive on the history of slavery, and one of the most extraordinary in British history. In over 8,000 papers – letters, maps, deeds inventories, notebooks and surveys – are the records of the Barbudan people from 1668 to emancipation and after (the last document is from 1944).

In 1980, the Codrington family decided to sell the collection, which they did in an auction at Sotheby's that December, to a private buyer with interests in the oil deposits off the island (why the British government didn't bid is a moot point). But after negotiating with the buyer's lawyers and getting clearance from HM Customs and Excise, I was able to film the archive in a bonded warehouse under the flight path at Heathrow. Looking back it was like the last scene in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Just lifting the lid off one of the packing cases took us back to the 18th century. There were our families: Beazers, Punters, Charleses, Webbers and Teagues – the surnames shared by virtually everyone from the island today, taken from the names of the white overseers and indentured labourers. They were families whose solidarity over the generations bred a strong group identity much admired by outsiders. And there in the documents was the name of the place they had been taken from in Africa: *Coromantee*.

Now here in 2023 was the exact place: the little coastal town, the beach, the palm trees, the thunderous surf, and the fort on the hill – the last thing they saw before they sailed over the horizon into the horrors of the Middle Passage. Perhaps 12 million people faced such a fate in the slavery era, of whom as many as 2 million perished on the journey. And these things leave very long legacies.

Some people talk today as if slavery was a thing that happened in the past, but not so: its effects are still working themselves out in our lives today. The compensation payments to British landowners for the freeing of their slaves were only finally paid off in 2015. The past, as Faulkner said, is never dead. It's not even past. ■

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and is the author of several books including *The Story of China* (Simon & Schuster, 2021). His Twitter handle is @mayavision

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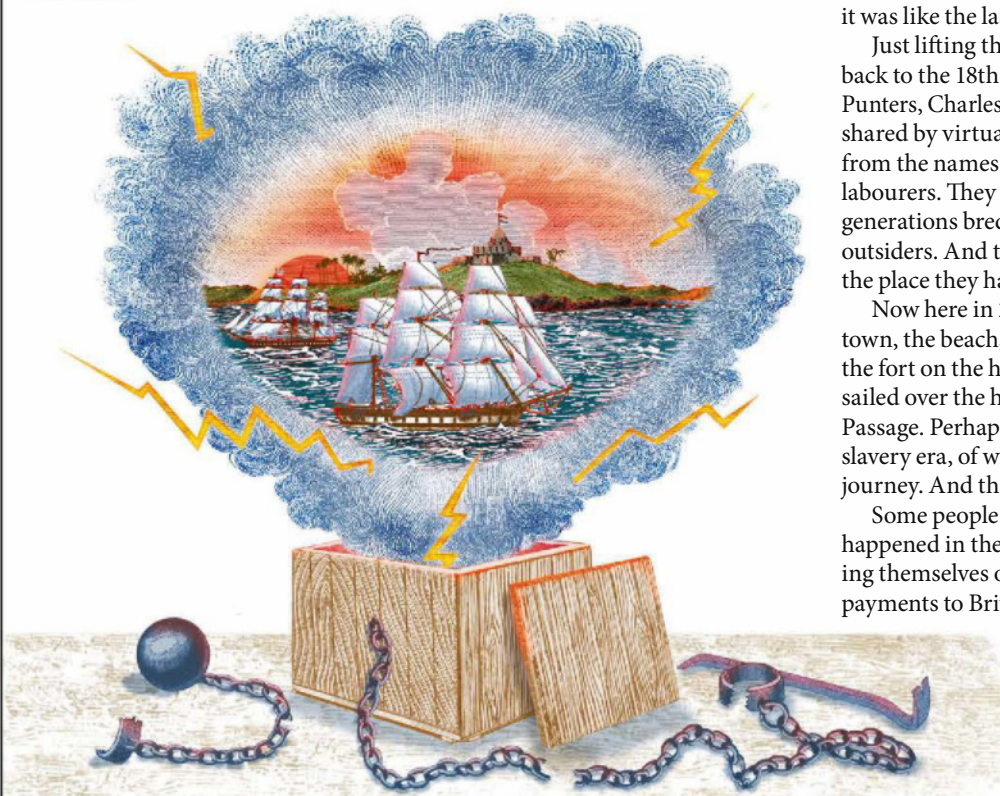


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HIDDEN HISTORIES

KAVITA PURI explores lesser-known stories from our past

// Members of the Clapham Sect were both of their time and ahead of it //

Kavita Puri

is a journalist and broadcaster for BBC Radio 4 whose history series include *Three Pounds in My Pocket*. She is also the author of *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (Bloomsbury, 2019)



OFF CLAPHAM COMMON NORTH SIDE, NEAR the Old Town, stands the Anglican Holy Trinity Church. It's an imposing edifice, completed in 1776 near the site of a medieval church – in fact, an act of parliament was required to permit its construction. But its historical importance isn't due to architecture or its older heritage.

In the 18th century, Clapham was just a village on the ancient road from London Bridge to Kingston; maps from the period show how green it was. Around the time the church was built, wealthy families were moving to the area – many to houses around the common – to escape unhealthy city life. This village was leafier than London and less crowded – and of course the air was better, too.

Worshipping at this new church from the 1790s to the 1830s were a group of evangelical Anglicans led by the rector, John Venn. In his 2010 book *The Clapham Sect*, Stephen Tomkins describes “a network of friends and families in England, with William Wilberforce its centre of gravity, powerfully bound together by shared moral and spiritual values, by their religious mission and social activism, by their love for each other, and by marriage”.

Wilberforce was a well-known abolitionist and MP. Others in the group included Henry Thornton, also an

MP, and Zachary Macauley, a Scottish statistician and one of the founders of London University. Many of them were Oxbridge-educated and held positions of power and influence within the establishment. Though predominantly men, the group also included women such as playwright and religious writer Hannah More.

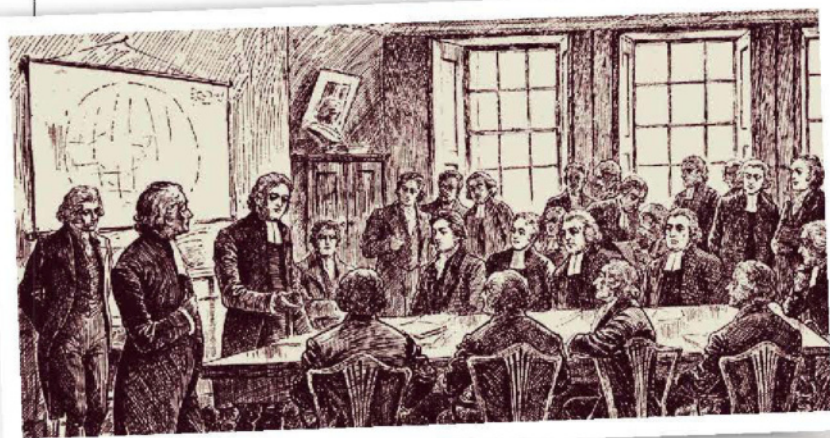
This evangelical group is best known for its part in the campaign for the abolition of slavery in the British empire, and in the founding of the first British colony in Africa. Sierra Leone was established with the purpose, as one group member put it, of achieving “the abolition of the slave trade, the civilisation of Africa, and the introduction of the gospel there”. At the time, members of the group later dubbed the Clapham Sect were ridiculed as “the Saints”. They were subjected to significant social stigma as a result of their involvement in the antislavery cause, not least because there were those who saw the abolitionists as radical and dangerous, as well as threatening their interests.

What is less known is that in Clapham, in a Georgian house near St Paul's Church, the group established the African Academy between 1799 and 1805. There, 25 sons of African traders and families of influence were taught a range of subjects, but principally religious instruction. Many of the pupils would die of measles, and some of their graves are still in the church.

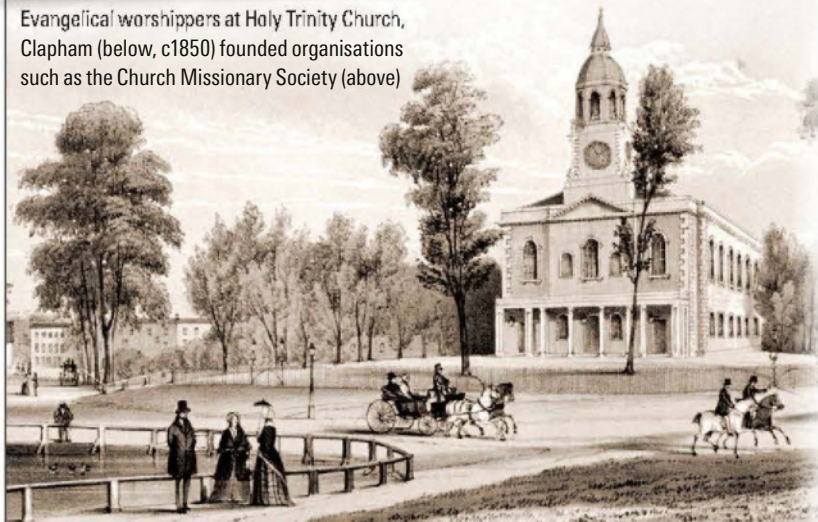
They championed other causes, too. In 1793, the group tried (but failed) to alter the charter of the East India Company to allow missionaries to work in India. The Company resisted, concerned that these religious arrivals could spark civil unrest and make some Indians feel threatened, resulting in commercial ventures and profits being adversely affected. However, when the Company's charter came up for renewal in 1813, Wilberforce – along with another member of the Clapham Sect, Charles Grant, who was chairman of directors of the East India Company – successfully inserted a ‘missionary clause’. The group's aim was for British missionaries to be able to go anywhere Britain had a presence. In 1799, they had already established the Church Mission Society for Africa and the East.

The Clapham Sect also ran political campaigns to achieve prison reform, prevent cruel sports and suspend the game laws mandating heavy penalties, including transportation, for poaching. It founded religious and benevolent societies working on behalf of impoverished or exploited women, such as the wonderfully named Society for Returning Young Women to Their Friends in the Country, and the Friendly Female Society for the Relief of Poor, Infirm, Aged Widows, and Single Women of Good Character Who Have Seen Better Days.

Members of the Clapham Sect were both of their time and ahead of it. They were entrenched in the establishment, with all the benefits that bestowed, yet railing against it in the hope of creating a better new world. **H**



Evangelical worshippers at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham (below, c1850) founded organisations such as the Church Mission Society (above)



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LETTERS



Civil war general John Lambert, whose escape from the Tower of London is noted by reader Stephen Hayward

LETTER OF THE MONTH

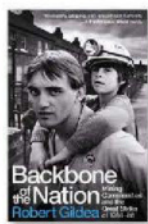
Down and out

Reading about Roger Mortimer's 14th-century escape from the Tower of London (*The King of Folly*, August) reminded me of another remarkable breakout from the fortress – with equally dramatic consequences. In April 1660, John Lambert, the Roundhead major general imprisoned by the new pro-royalist government, clambered down a silk rope which had been smuggled into his cell and slipped away on a boat waiting for him on the Thames.

A chambermaid wearing Lambert's nightcap took his place in his curtained bed and prevented the alarm being raised until the next morning. Lambert, once a key adviser to Oliver Cromwell and tipped to succeed him as lord protector, called an Easter Sunday rendezvous of his men at Edgehill, scene of the first bloody clash between Roundheads and Cavaliers, in a desperate last stand against the return of Charles II.

But before Lambert could reach the Warwickshire hillside he was captured, tried for treason and condemned to death. Unlike Mortimer, though, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Stephen Hayward, Surrey



We reward the Letter of the Month writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Backbone of the Nation: Mining Communities and the Great Strike of 1984–85** by Robert Gildea. You can read our review on page 70

Arch enemies?

I enjoyed Tom Holland's feature on Pax Romana (August), particularly his emphasis on the architectural landscape and the way that emperor Trajan's markets, with their marble opulence, bordered Rome's notoriously poor suburban district. It shows how the buildings and monuments constructed by rulers often conceal certain groups from view.

I would have liked to have read more on the triumphal arches across the Roman empire, many of which have remained relatively intact. Resembling a city entrance gate, but with no adjoining walls, these arches were meant to symbolise the 'Pax Romana' that the armies had brought to the provinces. However, their imposing size and depictions of war and conquest also acted as a reminder to local populations of the strength of Roman power should they dare to rebel. Such triumphal arches were mirrored in European 19th-century neoclassical city architecture for the same purpose of emphasising military might.

I remember looking at the bound Dacian warriors on the Arch of Constantine next to the Colosseum many years ago. These sculptures were originally displayed in Trajan's forum, and I couldn't help but think that if they were viewed by Dacians or any of the enslaved people living in Rome – many of whom would have lost their lives in the arena – they would take on a very different meaning. The issues surrounding statues in city landscapes are nothing new.

Laura Aitken-Burt, London

Medical anxieties

I read with interest the feature on the creation of the NHS (*How Britain Fell in Love with the NHS*, August), especially the comments that a significant number of people thought the plans would lead to a bureaucratic impersonal system under government control.

My father was one of those, and when I got type 1 diabetes in 1949 he refused to use the NHS. When I was admitted to King's College Hospital, I was put in a small private room next to the NHS diabetic ward. As a seven-year-old I remember a windowless room and only occasional visits from nurses and doctors. I was obviously very frightened, and the next day the consultant realised my distress and moved me into the general NHS diabetic ward.

I then encountered many similar sufferers who lightened my mood and made the experience less painful. Seeing fellow patients also suffering injections with big needles and glass syringes gave me enormous support.

Colin Coles, Cobham

Flying visits

I read with interest David Clarke's article on UFOs (*The Conversation*, August) and agree that UFO stories are nothing new. Indeed, they date a lot further back than the airship scares of the 19th century: there are reports of UFOs in the Bible and from Roman times, and references to mythological flying chariots, or *vimanas*, in Hindu texts.

Andrew Hudson, Ulverston

Crime and consequence

Regarding your feature on the US civil rights movement (*Fighting for Freedom*, August), I'd like to add a footnote to the murder of Emmett Till [the young black teenager killed in Mississippi in 1955]. Although the perpetrators of this atrocity were acquitted, they did not get simply to walk away from their crime. Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market [the business owned by the perpetrators' family] was boycotted by the black community who had made up a majority of their customer base, eventually bankrupting it.

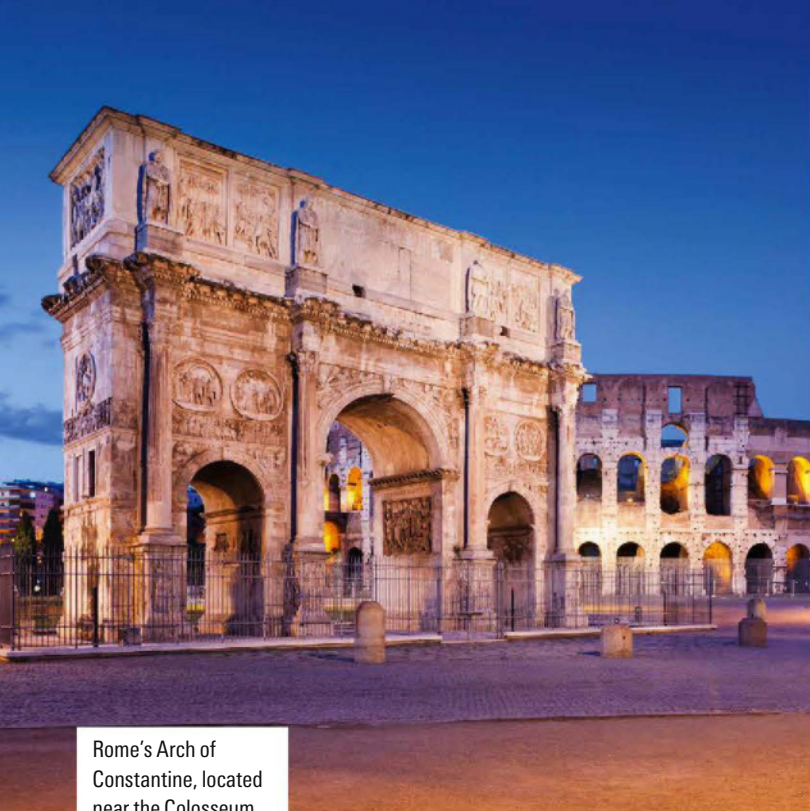
After Roy Bryant and JW Milam gave a notorious interview to *Look* magazine confessing in full and without regrets to Till's murder, they unintentionally exposed



A nurse with a young patient at Kent and Canterbury Hospital, 1954. Reader Colin Coles recalls his own formative NHS experience

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➤ Page 46



Rome's Arch of Constantine, located near the Colosseum. Reader Laura Aitken-Burt highlights the way such structures could be used as a tool of social control

the corruption of their trial, humiliated their supporters and were subsequently shunned by the local white community. As a result, neither men could get decent work, spending their lives in poverty drifting between menial jobs. By brazenly admitting their guilt to the nation, Bryant and Milam only added more fuel to the campaign for civil rights and helped topple the obscene order they wished to preserve.

Jared Leavitt, Hove

Sunset on a golden age

I thoroughly enjoyed the article on Turner's famous painting *The Fighting Temeraire* (*Anniversaries*, September), and the way in which he used his artistic licence to reinstate the great ship's masts and depict a solitary steam tug pulling it upriver on the Thames, instead of two. I should add, however, that his most brilliant piece of artistic licence, a metaphor for the passing of the age of sail, was placing the sun setting in the east, somewhere over Margate!

Vaughan Grylls, Canterbury

JW Milam and Roy Bryant (left and right) at the time of their trial for the murder of Emmett Till, in which they were found not guilty. Jared Leavitt points to the role played by social, if not criminal, justice



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Templars on trial



From 1307, members of the Knights Templar were beaten, brutalised and put to death on charges of heresy, Satanism and mass murder. But, asks **Steve Tibble**, were this elite band of holy warriors fitted up for crimes they didn't commit?



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A brutal reckoning

This c1413–15 manuscript illustration by Boucicaut Master depicts the burning of Knights Templar in the presence of King Philip IV of France. Philip, jealous of the Templars' reputed vast wealth, drove the persecution of the crusading order

They arrived with no warning, striking swiftly as a guillotine blade. As dawn broke over France on Friday 13 October 1307, hundreds of royal troops stormed the residences of Templar knights, rounded up the brethren and put them in chains.

The knights were caught completely unawares – and the charges that were set out against them were extraordinary. Allegations included participating in Satanic initiation ceremonies; spitting or trampling on the crucifix; worshipping idols; and kissing their brothers on the navel, penis, lips and anus in profane masses.

It was a spectacular fall from grace for the Knights Templar, a military-religious order that had long been esteemed across Europe and beyond. For nearly two centuries, since the order's foundation in Jerusalem c1119 (see box, right), the Templars had been charged with defending residents of, and pilgrims to, the crusader states of the Middle East. Once celebrated across the Christian world for their unwavering courage in battle and the zeal with which they served God, suddenly they were being reviled and attacked. How and why did this dramatic collapse in fortunes come about?

The driving force behind the assault on the Templars was France's King Philip IV, 'the Fair'. Philip was outwardly pious, but also in great need of cash. Indeed, he had a track record of crushing minority groups in pursuit of easy money. In the early 1290s, he had arrested all of the so-called Lombard bankers – Italian moneylenders – in France, and confiscated their goods. And in 1306, he had expelled France's Jewish community and seized their assets.

Now he turned his sights on the Templars – another reputedly wealthy group. Pope Clement V was coerced into acquiescence and, in 1307, the pontiff ordered the Templars' arrest. The torture now began.

Accused of a litany of heinous crimes, some Templars proclaimed their innocence. Thirty-six such men died during the initial interrogations in Paris; their defiant testimonies were erased from the legal records. Most, though, confessed quickly. Across France, torture was routinely applied to suspects: victims were told what to say, and then brutalised until they said it.

One Templar priest in Albi, north-east of Toulouse, told how his feet had been burned over a fire. This did not mean just an uncomfortable toasting: a couple of days later, two bones fell out of the dead flesh of his gruesomely barbecued foot. One brother later testified that he was encouraged to confess

"by the hanging of weights on his genitals and other members".

Another French Templar, Brother Ponsard of Gizy, disarmingly honest about the power of torture, summed up the pros and cons of the methodology. When he appeared in front of a papal commission in November 1309, he was adamant that the charges made against him were trumped up – but added that, if his captors chose to torture him, he would readily agree with whatever they suggested. He wanted it placed on record that he would confess to anything – if subjected to torture.

Over the following months, the confessions kept flooding in. Satanism, heresy, sexual perversion and financial corruption – the Templars of France were found guilty of them all. In fact, given the sheer weight of the obscene and outlandish crimes of which they stood accused, it's perhaps surprising that it would be another four years before the order was finally dissolved.

A papal edict

Templars weren't only found in France, though: this international order drew members from Christian nations across Europe. What, then, was the fate of the Templars across the Channel? After all, at the time England was still a Catholic nation, subject to papal edict just as much as France. And though Edward II initially doubted the

charges levelled at the order, in December 1307 he received a directive from the pope to arrest Templars in England – which he did in January 1308. Soon, all but a very small handful of the 144 Templars based in Britain and Ireland were in custody.

Relations between Templars in Britain and France were close, and members on either side of the Channel would almost certainly have been equally guilty (or, more likely, innocent) of the alleged crimes. But the two groups experienced strikingly different fates at the hands of the respective authorities following the mass arrests of October 1307, mostly because English law was strikingly different from that of France.

In early 14th-century England, there was less royal control of the judiciary. English courts did not have an inquisition. Most importantly, English law relied on witnesses and a jury, and torture was not routinely used within the legal system. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, two years of harsh but non-violent interrogation in England yielded no confessions and almost no evidence of guilt.

For all that, Templars in Britain were still charged with terrible crimes – and by examining those accusations in greater detail, we can get to the bottom of a question that has puzzled historians for centuries: were the Templars guilty of any of the charges laid against them, or were they the victims of an egregious 14th-century stitch-up?

Chief among the charges in Britain was the allegation that the Templars' leaders had deliberately sent whistleblowers overseas to die. One of the witnesses, for example, was a Carmelite friar (the Templars, it should be noted, had privileges that did not always

endear them to rival monastic orders) named Robert of Maidenesford, who said that he had been told by a servant, who remained conveniently anonymous, that because a brother "did not agree to their cursed profession he was sent secretly to overseas regions and there was killed by those to whom he was sent". But Robert of Maidenesford was no ordinary cleric. The imaginative Carmelite was also allegedly party to a plot to burn a man to death in an oven, so he may not have been the most reliable witness.

Similarly, two Dominican friars testified that troublesome Templars in Britain were given sealed letters to take out to the east, the contents of which were later found to include instructions that the recipient of each letter should kill the bearer. But this hearsay was

Far from hoarding 'secret treasure', the property owned by the Templars in Britain was carefully documented

Philip IV, known as 'the Fair' – for his looks, not for his grasping, vindictive character. As well as targeting the Templars, he expelled all Jews from France



an old trope: it later found a suitably dramatic and equally fictitious home in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Of course, many Templars in Britain were sent abroad – fighting and serving overseas was, after all, what they had volunteered to do. In the absence of any real evidence, or real crimes, their inquisitors were surely just scraping the barrel with this allegation.

But was another grave accusation made against the Templars also false: that they were fabulously rich and hoarding treasure? This charge was not entirely irrational. The money for crusading had to come from somewhere, and the Templars were given substantial tax breaks and properties through which to fund the defence of the Holy Land. It's not hard to see how other clerical orders, lacking these advantages, could soon start accusing the Templars of greed and avarice.

Far from hoarding secret treasure, though, property owned by Templars in Britain was carefully documented. Inventories of their assets were made by royal officials in January 1308, when the brothers were first arrested, and again a year later, on 4 March 1309. Any Satanic idols or secret treasures would not have remained secret – yet the accounts show that the personal possessions of the Templars were, in fact, surprisingly simple.

In London, the king's men seized only some clothes and wall coverings; two



Under pressure This papal report on the Templars' trial was lost for 700 years. It suggests the pope may have been inclined to leniency, but succumbed to pressure from Philip IV



Holy HQ Temple Church was built for the Templars in London in the 12th century. After the order was suppressed, the church was rented to lawyers' colleges that became known as Inner Temple and Middle Temple

IN CONTEXT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

On 15 July 1099, Jerusalem – the Holy City, spiritual epicentre of Christianity and Judaism, and third-holiest city of Islam – was captured from Muslim forces by the armies of the First Crusade. Yet it would prove immensely difficult to hold on to. Set inland and desperately underpopulated, Jerusalem was a military disaster waiting to happen for the Christian occupiers.

The success of the First Crusade, launched in 1096 following a papal call for Christian forces to retake the Holy Land, had enjoyed a huge stroke of luck. The big problem the new occupiers now faced was how to recruit high-quality soldiers to defend it in the long term. The answer to that problem was the Templars, established in Jerusalem in c1119. This hybrid military-religious order, officially the Poor Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, comprised dedicated men who combined the spiritual and martial virtues that would enable them to help protect pilgrims to the Holy Land and defend the new crusader states of the near east.

The order quickly grew into an elite warrior force, and a close approximation of a standing army. Volunteers were recruited from across Europe, and pious donors gave the order estates through which it could generate funds for the cause. The Templars rose to the challenge, taking over the policing of major roads, building fortifications and garrisoning vulnerable frontier lands.

For almost two centuries, the order led the defence of the Christian Middle East – ultimately, to no avail. By 1291, the last crusader cities there had fallen, and in 1307 the Templars in France were rounded up and arrested for heresy and Satanism, while their brethren in Britain were also targeted, though with less virulence. The order was officially suppressed in 1312.



A Templar knight in a 12th-century fresco from Cressac-Saint-Genis in south-western France

crossbows and a few swords; two books; and some sundry iron forks and fire stands. They found no precious metals, with the poignant exception of the property of one Richard of Herdwick, from whom were confiscated two silver cups and 12 silver spoons.

Certainly, any hidden treasure remained firmly hidden. Even the rumoured corporate treasure of the order's New Temple headquarters proved a major disappointment for the bailiffs. A number of valuables *were* held in its vestry – rich furnishings and beautiful fabrics, some reliquaries, ivory and high-quality silverwork – but nothing out of the ordinary for the provincial headquarters of a major religious order.

Was there any concealed loot? Inventories of goods owned by Templars in Britain record no hoards of money, jewels or idols, just items that might be expected in a holy order's properties. A total of 53 silver spoons were mentioned in the inventories, six of which were found at a home for aged and infirm Templars in Denney, Cambridgeshire. This amounted to one spoon for every two Templars arrested in Britain – hardly a treasure trove. Even in France, where the order was taken completely by surprise, no treasures were discovered.

Dark knights?

Another of the most damaging charges laid against the Templars – and the one that has arguably done most to fuel the conspiracies and bizarre tales of covert societies that still reverberate around the internet today – was the accusation that the Templars had evolved into a secret Satanic cult.

A secret cult requires, above all else, secrecy – but the Templars were never shut off from the rest of society. Their famous New Temple headquarters complex in London had the walls, the money and the financial skills that helped to create the Templar legend. Yet, as with so much of the mythology surrounding the order, almost nothing was what it seemed.

The New Temple was a vibrant and public centre for finance and worship, law and commerce – the very antithesis of a malevolent nest of conspiracies, devil worship or secret societies. If Templars in Britain were, in fact, trying to run a secret society, they were doing a spectacularly bad job of it.

This headquarters was a remarkably public place: people were walking in and out of the precinct almost all of the time. The church was open to the public for prayer. Pilgrims came to see the relics held there. Many non-Templars – women as well as men – worked or lived in the order's houses.

There was even a thoroughfare running through the middle of the precinct. This right



Carved in stone

Effigies of nine knights survive in Temple Church, including that of William Marshal who was advisor to five kings

If the Templars were trying to run a secret society, they were doing a spectacularly bad job

of way was used by pedestrians and as a lane for transporting goods down to a wharf on the Thames. In other words, the supposedly most secretive and private site owned by the order had what was, in effect, a public road running through the middle of it. Yet not one of the countless people passing through the Templars' headquarters spotted that the order had turned away from mainstream Christianity to devil worship and idolatry.

Another accusation was that admission to the Templars was a secretive affair. Admission ceremonies were of particular interest to the inquisitors, who imagined such a ritual to be the moment when devout and enthusiastic volunteers would learn that the order was a front for Satanic worship. But could this really have been true? In Britain, the Templars'

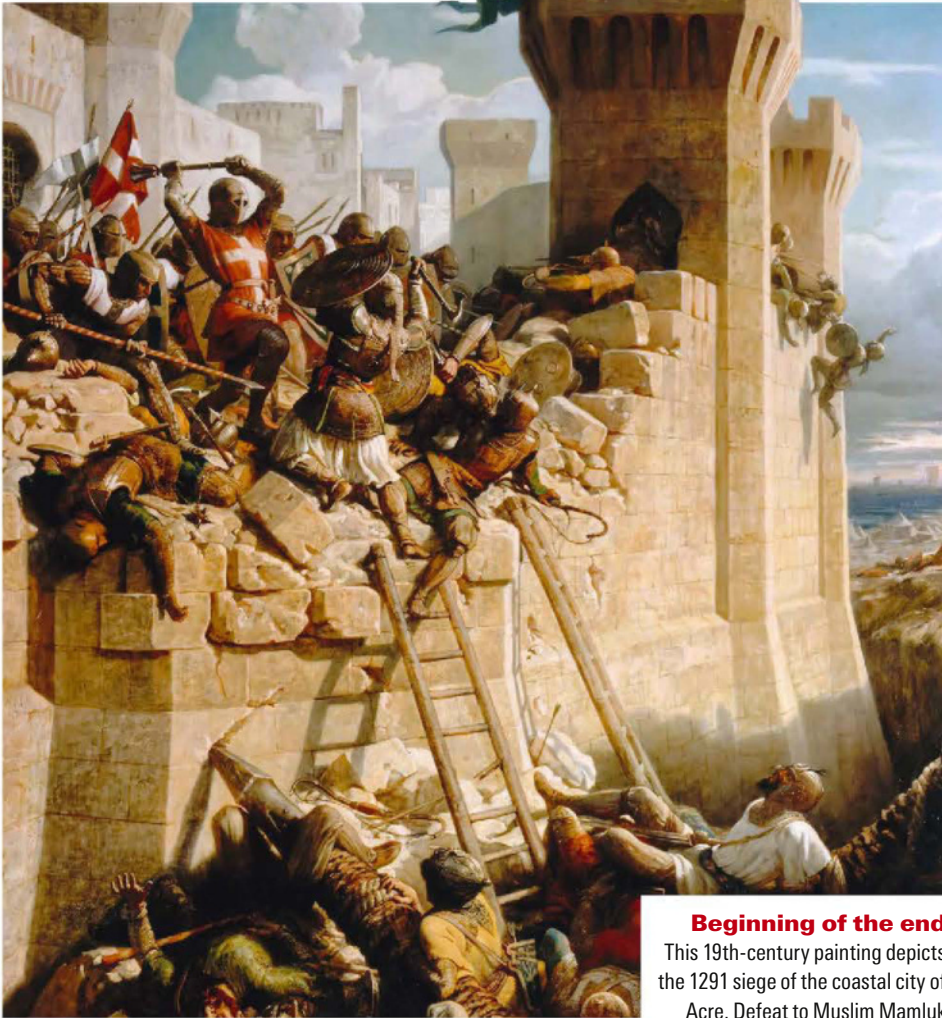
induction service was held in public. Far from being secretive, it was a cross between a family party and a modern graduation ceremony.

Across western Europe, young recruits usually joined the Templar house closest to their homes, so their devout and often influential families were close at hand, had there been anything untoward to report. They would have been eager to support their sons in revealing any trace of heresy.

It is true that many left the order, sometimes because of misdemeanours, or because they did not take to the rigours of Templar life. But these men, often disgruntled and with every reason to hold a grudge, told no tales of rampant wrongdoing.

Then there was the lack of complaints from the new entrants. Young knights joined because they were, as one Templar told the papal commissioners in Paris, "inspired by zeal for the orthodox faith, [and] have made their profession in the order of the Temple, remaining in it until the end of their lives. If such men had known, seen or heard of the detestable insults and blasphemies to the name of Jesus Christ, they would have cried out against them and revealed everything to the whole world." His logic was unarguable.

But perhaps the most convincing proof of innocence – especially relating to charges of Satanism – was conspicuous by its absence at Templar trials. It was never produced in



Beginning of the end

This 19th-century painting depicts the 1291 siege of the coastal city of Acre. Defeat to Muslim Mamluk forces here heralded the end of the Christian states in the Holy Land

was the order suppressed? Greed and credulity played a large part. The Templars' property portfolios were undoubtedly tempting. But perhaps the final key to understanding the 'guilt' of the Templars lies in their role – or, rather, lack of one.

No longer useful

For as long as the Templars still had a useful part to play in defending the Christian near east, no one accused them of anything substantive. But in 1291, Acre, capital of the last remaining crusader outposts in the Middle East, fell. On 18 May, Mamluk armies broke through the city's defences. The Templar grand master, William of Beaujeu, had gathered his men for a last charge, but their numbers were pitifully few – no more than "10 or 12 brethren and [William's] own household troops".

In that last battle, an English Templar squire struggled to rise from the body of his dead horse, while pots of Greek fire – an early incendiary weapon – exploded around him. He was so badly hit "that his surcoat burst into flames. There was no one to help him, and so his face was burned, and then his whole body, and he burned as if he had been a cauldron of pitch, and he died there."

But heroism counted for nothing. The fall of Acre meant the loss of the crusader states of the Middle East. It also meant that the Templars were left unemployed, unfocused and easy prey for opportunistic enemies.

Templars were doubtless guilty of many minor misdemeanours. But, beyond the normal vagaries of human weakness, the charges they faced were trumped up, based on almost no evidence other than irredeemably compromised confessions extracted from frightened men under torture.

Their real 'crime' was far more prosaic than all of the medieval and modern conspiracy theories. No one needed an elite and expensive army on the frontiers of Christendom any more – the Templars were redundant. And in March 1312, the papal order was finally issued to suppress the order. The Templars were no more. **H**

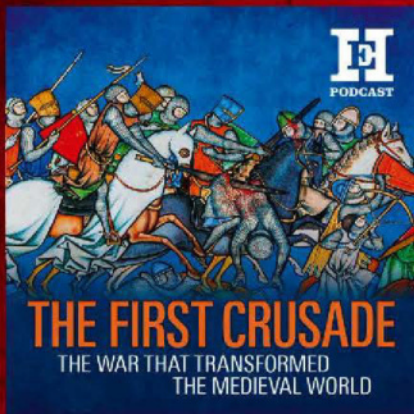
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Steve Tibble is honorary research associate at Royal Holloway, University of London. His latest book, *Templars: The Knights Who Made Britain*, is published by Yale in September

 Melvyn Bragg and guests discussed the Knights Templar for an episode

of **In Our Time**. Listen here: bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001cpwt

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COMING SOON: THE FIRST CRUSADE PODCAST SERIES



Steve Tibble is among the experts appearing in a special new podcast series coming to *HistoryExtra.com* on 12 October. Featuring contributions from several historians, the series will explore in depth the crusade's causes, key episodes and legacy.

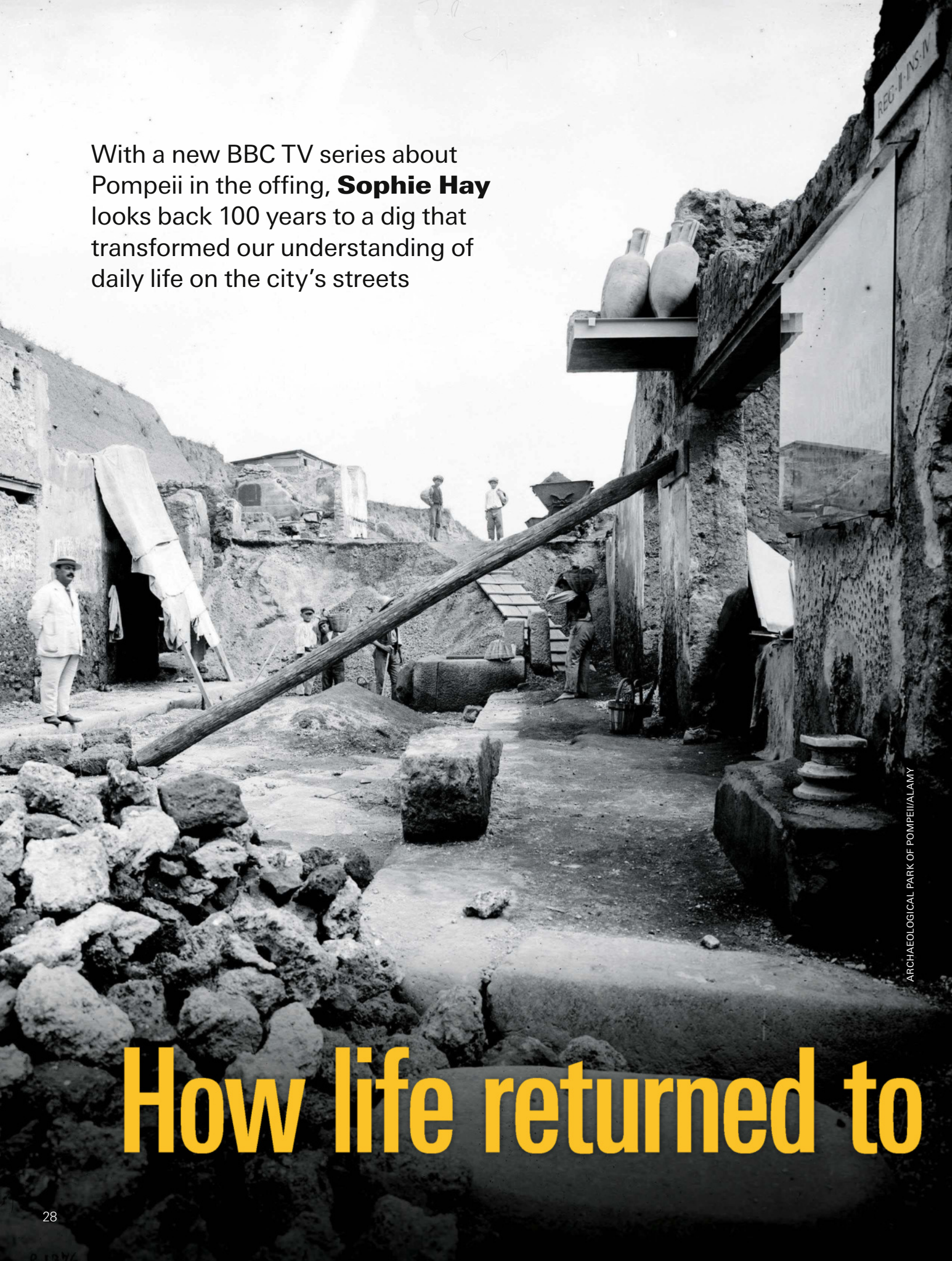
court precisely because it was so compelling.

On the day the order was dissolved in France, an inventory was made of all Templar possessions. There had been no warning of the impending suppression, so all idols would still have been held in Templars' treasuries and chapels. But the results were hugely disappointing for the inquisitors. Physical evidence of devil worship was non-existent in both France and Britain. Many religious books were found, but no hint in writing of any Satanic worship. There were crosses – large and small, precious and valueless – again, all normal items of Christian devotion and in suspiciously good condition. This was particularly embarrassing, given that new entrants to the order were supposedly forced to trample and then urinate on a crucifix.

In fact, the meticulous catalogues of possessions reveal nothing more than the pious reliquaries and other devotional aids that might be expected in one of the less academically gifted holy orders.

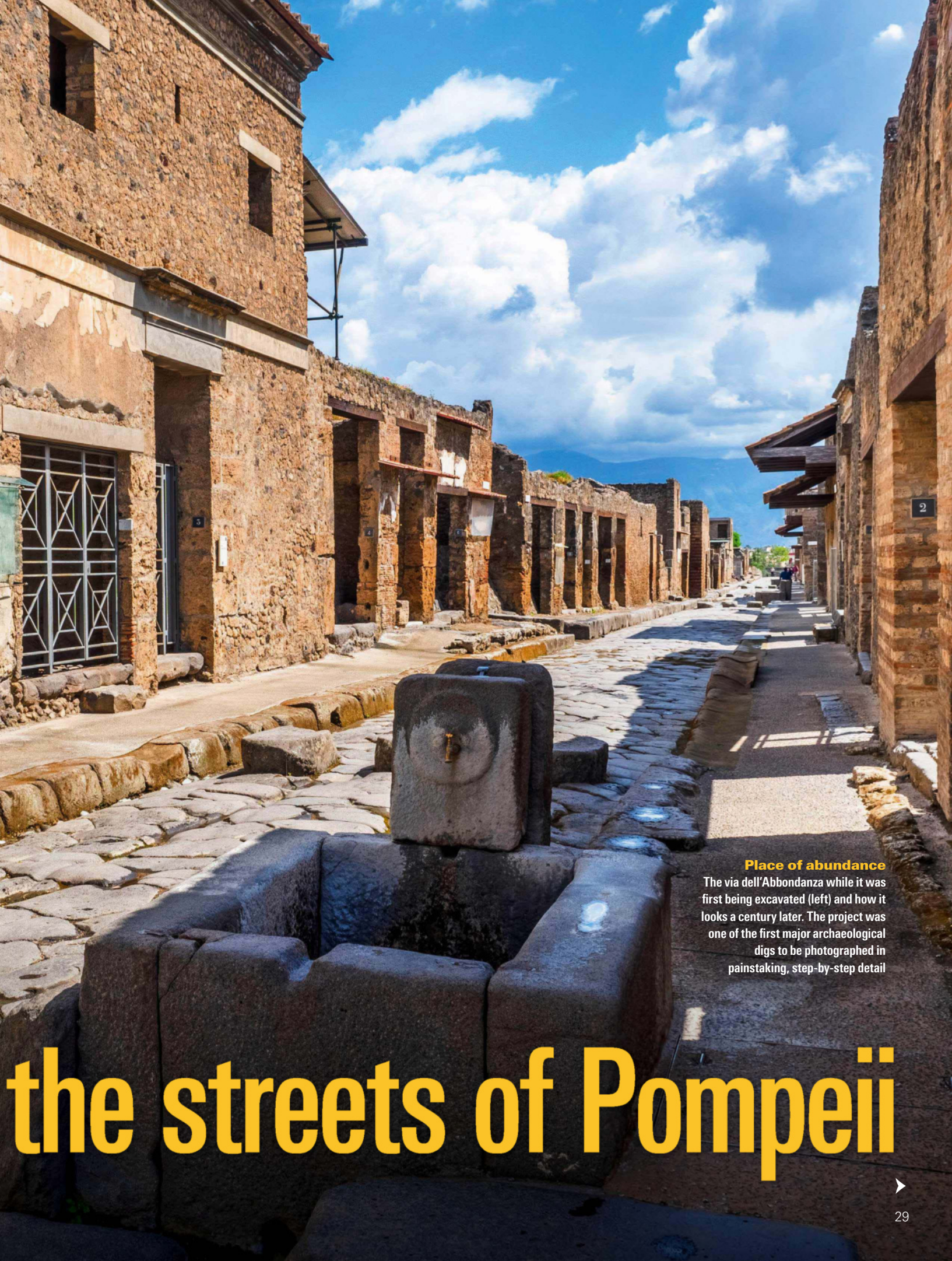
So why, in the absence of real evidence,

With a new BBC TV series about Pompeii in the offing, **Sophie Hay** looks back 100 years to a dig that transformed our understanding of daily life on the city's streets



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF POMPEII/ALAMY

How life returned to



Place of abundance

The via dell'Abbondanza while it was first being excavated (left) and how it looks a century later. The project was one of the first major archaeological digs to be photographed in painstaking, step-by-step detail

the streets of Pompeii



Pompeii street life

For 1,800 years, the streets of Pompeii lay dormant. Ever since the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius razed the city in AD 79, its alleyways, corners, shop fronts and crossroads had slumbered under a layer of volcanic debris. But then, in the second decade of the 20th century, something happened that would breathe life back into Pompeii's once teeming thoroughfares. That something was the appointment of a new superintendent of archaeological works, a man called Vittorio Spinazzola.

For decades, the daily life of the inhabitants of ancient Pompeii had been examined purely through the city's private houses and public buildings: its baths, its markets, its temples and bakeries. The streets connecting these places were often overlooked.

All that changed when Spinazzola arrived in Pompeii in 1911. The archaeologist was convinced that excavating the streets could yield rich evidence of daily life in the ancient city. Spinazzola's predecessors had concentrated on excavating single properties or insula blocks in the western part of the city. Spinazzola, however, took a different approach. He chose to excavate the remaining eastern half-kilometre stretch of the via dell'Abbondanza – the main east-west road that traversed the city – and the facades of the buildings that opened onto it.

By breaking the seal of the undisturbed volcanic deposits from the top downwards, Spinazzola revealed the upper floors and roofs of buildings that fronted onto the street as well as further evidence of life at street level itself. In the words of his son-in-law Salvatore Aurigemma: "No more monotonous... and deserted Pompeian streets but windows, balconies, canopies and terraces, one after another, as if all life had no purpose but the street."

Spinazzola was looking for a window onto Pompeii's streets and alleys, along which men, women and children – rich, poor and enslaved alike – and animals had once rubbed shoulders in places of constant flux. And that's what he'd go on to find.

Road repairs

A glance at one's feet while walking the streets of Pompeii will soon reveal that it is not just the uneven paving slabs that can cause an ankle to turn – the deep ruts pose more of a threat of injury. During a visit in the 1860s, Mark Twain noted: "I caught my foot in one of those ruts, and the sadness that came over me when I saw the first poor skeleton, with ashes and lava sticking to it, was tempered by the reflection that may be



One man's vision

Pompeii's streets were excavated under the guidance of Vittorio Spinazzola (left) in the early 20th century, revealing doorways, balconies and painted shop fronts

that party was the street commissioner."

Back in the first century AD, maintenance of the streets and roads was the responsibility of two elected officials known as *aediles*. Excavations along the via dell'Abbondanza revealed evidence of repairs to the road having been carried out, especially at the crossroads where the wheel ruts (evidence of the relentless grind of metal-rimmed wheels on the road surface) are far shallower. In the less busy side streets, repairs could cover more extensive stretches as they posed less of a disruption to the flow of traffic.

These physical manifestations of now absent carts, wagons and carriages give the modern visitor an immediate sense of busy highways – of a certain commotion of movement and clattering sounds as hooves and wheels pounded the street. There were restrictions as to when goods could be transported by wheeled vehicles into the city but it is easy to imagine, too, that these laws would often have been flouted.

Investigations into patterns of abrasion on kerbs and stepping stones, caused by the contact of wheel on stone, have revealed that a one and two-way traffic system was in place

Excavations along the via dell'Abbondanza revealed evidence of repairs to the road having been carried out

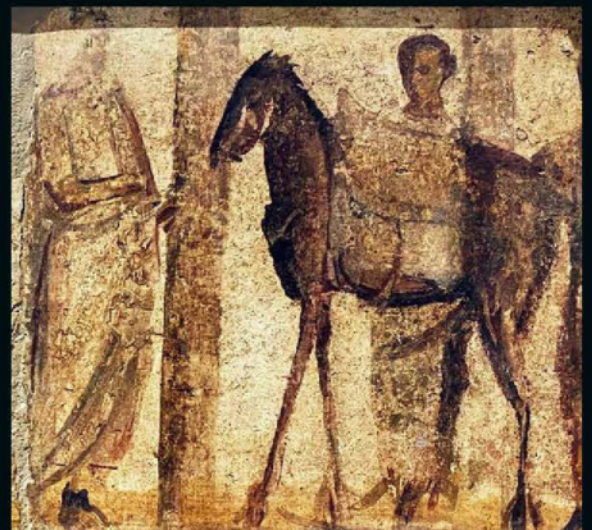


Low-traffic neighbourhoods

Scientific study of abrasion patterns on the kerbstones lining Pompeii's streets reveals that one-way systems were in place in some areas, while some were off-limits to traffic entirely



Merchants of all kinds (as shown in this fresco from Pompeii) would have lined the streets of what was then an important regional commercial hub



Carts and pack animals thronged roads, as depicted in this fresco in Pompeii's forum. "Hooves and wheels pounded the street," says Sophie Hay



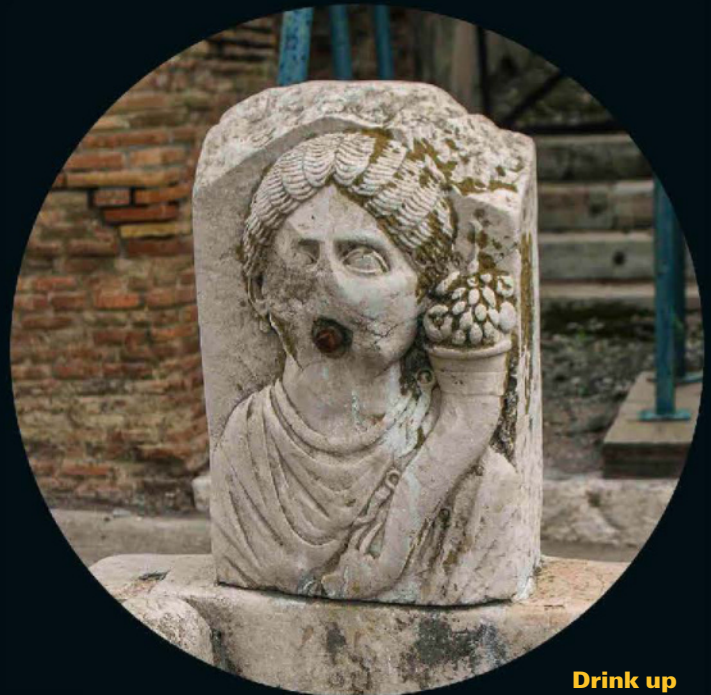
Piety and pipework

Drinking fountains and shrines were often found side-by-side in ancient Pompeii, as in the case of this “shrine to the 12 gods”



Early learning

This fresco showing a child reading, along with the prevalence of graffiti and written signage, suggests a high level of literacy in first-century Pompeii



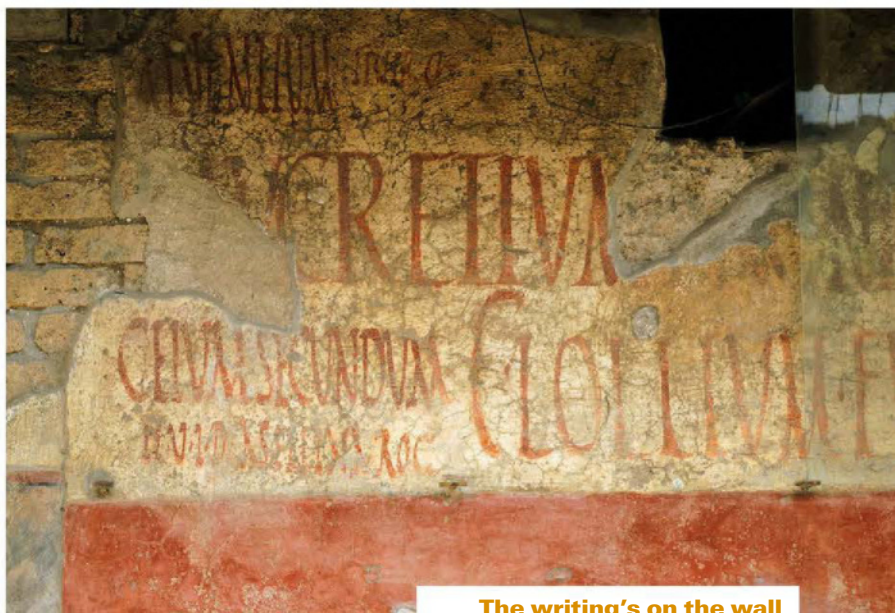
Drink up

Public water fountains were a common sight across the city, and were often decorated with ornate carvings



Sloganeering

An election campaign message written above a mural depicting the god Mercury. Writing text alongside religious frescoes added weight to such political messages



The writing's on the wall

Messages of all kinds could be found on the walls of Pompeii, from shop signs to political slogans to scurrilous graffiti

in the town. However, no wheeled vehicle was permitted into the city's forum: each entrance to the public square was blocked by means of steps or stone bollards.

Fountains of knowledge

The water required by the inhabitants of Pompeii for drinking, cooking, washing and cleaning was initially provided by public and private wells, or by rainwater collected in the home before being stored in underground cisterns. But following the construction of an aqueduct in the Augustan period (27 BC–14 AD), Pompeii was supplied with fresh, piped water that fed, among other things, public fountains. There are about 40 of these distributed along the city's streets, many of them decorated with reliefs of gods, animals and religious symbols at their spout.

Fountains represented much more than just convenient points of water collection; they were important neighbourhood meeting places where conversations were had, stories were swapped and gossip was whispered. But they weren't the only places where the people of Pompeii congregated along the city's streets. They would often head to a local street shrine (commonly found near a fountain, and which often took the form of a small altar or niche in a wall), where they would make offerings, sing devotional songs and engage in rituals and slow-moving processions.

More than 30 of Pompeii's street shrines coincide with the intersections of roads and, as such, each served a particular *vici* (neigh-

bourhood). Such shrines were the focal point of the religious festival of the *Compitalia*, which celebrated the gods, or *lares*, of the crossroads. Ceremonies in Pompeii were presided over by slaves or freemen acting as the 'neighbourhood officers'.

Frescoes associated with some of these shrines depict groups of officials tending to an altar, and ancient sources suggest that, as part of the rites of this festival, neighbourhood households would offer honey cakes. Successive layers of these frescoes further suggest that the continually changing officials repainted them regularly, often adding their own names.

Yet the texts on the facades of buildings were not limited to the names of magistrates of the *vici*. Many of the facades emerging from the pumice have revealed brightly coloured, painted frontages, some with chequered designs, others with decorative frescoes and coloured sections of wall. Several were emblazoned with painted written notices (*dipinti*) in red or black elegant lettering.

The vast majority of these *dipinti* – about 2,500 of them – consisted of political messages (*programmata*) related to civic elections. These were often painted by professional signwriters on whitewashed plaster, and followed a simple formula: the name of the candidate and the political office he was seeking. Some diverged from this prescriptive form to include the name of the supporter, while personal messages were added to further sway voters. Some may even have been intentional smear campaigns, such as

Many of the facades emerging from the pumice have revealed brightly coloured, painted frontages



More than a game

In AD 59, fighting broke out between Pompeians and Nucerians, as seen in this contemporary fresco. Gladiatorial events were banned in the city as a result

the notice that read: “The late drinkers ask you to elect Marcus Cerrinius Vatia aedile. Florus and Fructus wrote this.”

Although women were not entitled to vote, they were clearly involved in the campaign process: about 60 *programmata* feature the names of female endorsers, including those of a group of barwomen.

Other painted signs advertised upcoming gladiator games and entertainment in the amphitheatre – one advert promises “a procession, hunt, athletics and awnings” – and the presenter of the games in a number of these notices is identified as “Gn. Alleius Nigidius Maius”.

Gladiatorial combat was a staple of Roman entertainment in the first century AD, yet here it is conspicuous by its absence. This suggests that Alleius Nigidius Maius was in charge of presenting the games during a ban on gladiators imposed by the Emperor Nero as punishment for a riot that broke out between the Pompeians and local rivals from Nucera in AD 59. It is quite remarkable that the riot, an event documented by an ancient source and captured in a Pompeian fresco, is also traceable through the written word on the streets of the city.

Inner city life

The sheer quantity of painted signs daubed on the walls and graffiti scratched into the plasterwork of buildings suggests there must have been a relatively high level of literacy among the population of Pompeii. There is, after all, little to be gained from communicating with written words if very few people can read them. Graffiti represents the great

unedited voice of the people. Far from the formal official language of notices and inscriptions, the doodles and snarky (though often witty) comments etched into the street frontages bring us up close to those pedestrians who once loitered long enough to leave their mark.

And though there is rich evidence to suggest that the thoroughfares of Pompeii were places of continual motion, loitering was also an integral part of street life – whether that was pausing in front of shops to browse their wares, waiting in line to use the water fountain, stopping to talk or gossip with a client or friend, or sitting on the stone benches that flanked the doorways of private houses while waiting to discuss business with the wealthy occupants.

Incredibly, archaeological evidence in Pompeii offers us some further direct proof of those that lingered on the streets. In a winding side street, in the vicinity of a public bath complex, a bar and the entrance to what was perhaps a small brothel, a message painted in white letters reads: “This is no place for idlers; take off, loiterer.”

The discovery of a large number of electoral *programmata*, graffiti and advertisements for games just down the road suggests that those who heeded the warning notice didn’t necessarily travel very far.

The main thoroughfares of Pompeii were lined with commercial outlets such as barbers, cobblers, bakeries, mat makers, pigment sellers, goldsmiths, fulleries, metal workshops, food retailers and, of course, bars. All would have added to the hubbub of city life, with craftsmen hawking their wares, customers browsing, drinkers spilling out from the bars, carts picking their way through the throng and local residents stepping into the fray from the depths of their houses. And all have been brought vividly to life by the programme of archaeological research that Vittorio Spinazola set in train just over a century ago.

Pompeii’s streets may have been silenced in the most terrible circumstances in AD 79, but before Vesuvius razed the city they were far from mute. Of all the places in Pompeii, the streets were where the city was most alive. And it is in the streets where we find the best evidence of the communal daily life of all strata of society. **H**

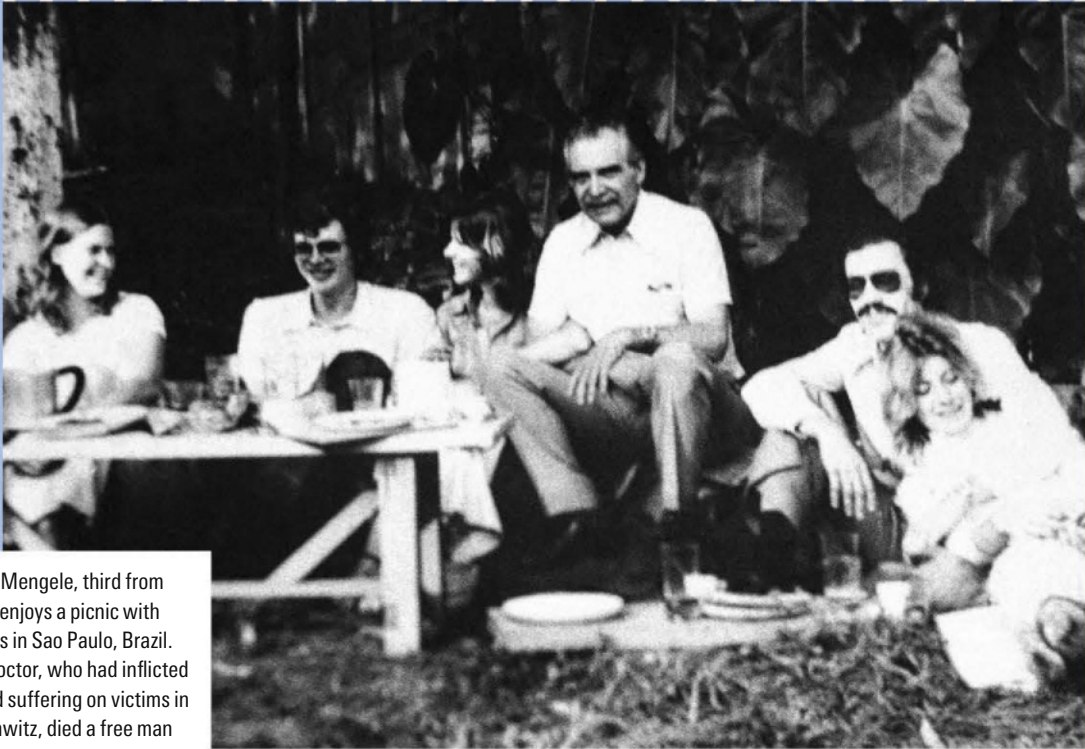
Sophie Hay is an archaeologist specialising in Pompeii. She is currently writing a book on female archaeologists involved in the city’s excavations, as well as working for the Archaeological Park of Pompeii



Look out for the three-part BBC Two series **Pompeii: The New Dig** coming in 2024

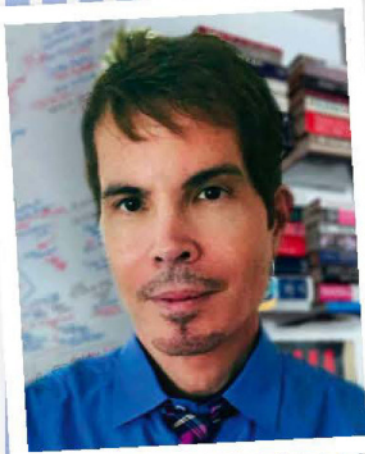


Though the thoroughfares of Pompeii were places of continual motion, loitering was also an integral part of street life



Josef Mengele, third from right, enjoys a picnic with friends in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The doctor, who had inflicted untold suffering on victims in Auschwitz, died a free man

MY HUNT FOR JOSEF MENGELE



In 1949 the notorious Nazi doctor fled to South America. Three decades later, **Gerald Posner** (left) set out to track him down. Here the former lawyer tells us about his mission to catch the 'Angel of Death'

INTERVIEW BY **MATT ELTON**

Accompanies **Rise of the Nazis: The Manhunt** on BBC Two



**How did Rolf Mengele view his father?**

Hear more of Gerald Posner's experiences tracing the legacy of Josef Mengele on our podcast: historyextra.com/podcast



Matt Elton Before we talk about the part you played in the hunt for Josef Mengele, can we briefly set out his role in the Holocaust?

Gerald Posner Mengele was a doctor at Auschwitz, where he did two things for which he's become notorious. First, he conducted all kinds of human experiments, some on children and many on twins. And, second, he waited at the camp entrance for trains to arrive packed with people, mostly Jews, from all over Nazi-occupied Europe, and selected who lived and who died. He wasn't the only Nazi doctor at Auschwitz, but he became the most notorious for his enthusiasm for his gruesome work – and for escaping after the war and remaining a fugitive for many decades.

Did his crimes mean he was regarded as particularly worthy of being brought to justice after the war ended?

There was a limit to how many Nazis could be brought to justice. Some 50,000 worked at the camps in different positions, from guards to doctors and overseers to commandants. About 2,500 were eventually tried; thousands more returned to normal lives after the war without paying any price for their actions.

It may be hard to accept, but not every Nazi at every concentration camp liked the work. Some were sadistic, and some were pathological, but for many it was not considered a great assignment. Auschwitz was in Poland, where summers were hot and winters freezing – bad for the prisoners, but also for those who worked at the camps. I don't mean to suggest that anyone should feel sorry for the Nazis, but some of them didn't like it. That's not the case with Mengele. He relished it: he viewed Auschwitz as a step up in his career, as a way to make a name for himself.

What did Nazis do when it became clear that the war was coming to an end?

The regime started to collapse very quickly at the end of 1944, and hardline Nazi zealots had two main goals. The first was to cover up their crimes, so at camps including Auschwitz they destroyed the gas chambers and tried to destroy the crematoriums. Then they tried to escape west. They didn't want to stay in Poland, because Soviet troops – who had a reputation for brutality – were coming, and seeking vengeance for the terrible sufferings inflicted on them during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. So Nazi officials wanted to escape – but if they couldn't, would rather be caught by the Americans or the British.

Mengele was caught twice by the Americans and released, along with many others, among the millions of displaced people after the war.

Mengele spent four years in Europe – in Czechoslovakia and Germany – after the war. How was he able to stay for so long?

Actually, it wasn't so unusual. For example, the chief pharmacist at Auschwitz, Victor Capesius, who had stolen gold from the teeth of corpses, went to West Germany after the war and opened a pharmacy. Mengele knew that he was being searched for, but expected that the British and the Americans would eventually leave their occupied zones and return control of the country to the West Germans, who would say: "We're so sorry for the terrible things that happened, but now let's get on with fighting the Cold War."

Then, in 1948, a number of people with whom Mengele had served at Auschwitz were tried. They were being sentenced to death or



Mengele (centre) pictured with two commandants of Auschwitz, Richard Baer (left) and Rudolf Höss, at an SS retreat in 1944



The papers with which Mengele gained entry to Argentina in 1949, using the name Helmut Gregor. There he joined a network of fugitive Nazis

to long prison sentences. So at that point, Mengele opted to go to South America.

Why was South America such a popular destination for Nazis?

Because it was far away! But the reason that Argentina was the nation to which most of the Nazis went was because, although it was neutral in the war, it had a large German community who thought that the Germans had been punished too much after the conflict ended. The Allies put Nazis on trial for war crimes – but if it had been the other way around, and Germany had won, they thought that there may instead have been trials of the British pilots who had firebombed Dresden and the American pilots who had dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That's not a moral equivalency, but it's how they justified it to themselves.

So when Mengele and other Nazis arrived in Argentina, they found a country in which there was already a network of Nazi sympathisers and a large German community to welcome them.

How was it possible for Mengele to stay undetected in South America for decades?

He arrived with some money from the Mengele family farm-machinery manufacturing company, and gradually started to feel as though the Nazi hunters weren't interested in him. At one point in the mid-1950s, he walked into the West German embassy in Buenos Aires and said: "By the way, my name is not really Helmut Gregor [the fake name in the fake passport on which he'd arrived in 1949], it's Josef Mengele, and I would like a passport in my real name." Nobody in the West German embassy said: "You're the right age to have served in the Second World War, you arrived in Argentina under a fake name, and now you're giving this name? I'll check to see if it's on the wanted list."

It was a remarkable bit of incompetence and apathy that allowed him to live there in style and comfort. I also think that the West German embassy had been penetrated by Argentine Nazi sympathisers.

It's almost impossible now to establish who put his application through. But it is astonishing that this Nazi fugitive felt so comfortable that in 1958 he was listed in the Buenos Aires phonebook under his real name. All you needed to know was which city to look in and you would have found him.

In 1960, near Buenos Aires, the Israelis kidnapped Adolf Eichmann, the bureaucrat



Two of Mengele's victims, twins Lia Huber and Judith Barnea, at the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem, 2018. As Mengele never left behind medical records, what he sought to achieve from his brutal experiments remains a mystery

who ran the trains to the concentration camp. That's when Mengele decided to move away from Argentina.

How and why did you first become involved in this story?

In 1981, I had just joined a small law practice in New York City when a friend told me that the US Department of Justice (DoJ), where he worked, had been approached by Auschwitz survivors – twins who'd been experimented on as children by Josef Mengele. They asked whether the DoJ might bring an action against the German government to try to find Mengele. It couldn't, but my friend asked if I might help these twins.

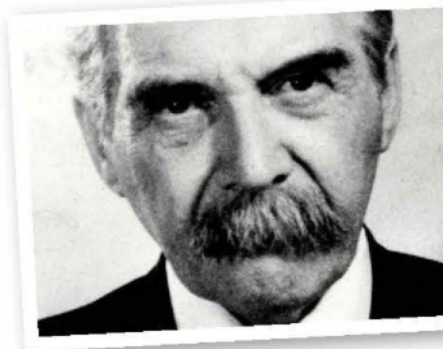
So I met Marc Berkowitz and his sister Francesca. Marc wanted money from the German government to pay for his medical bills – the thousands of dollars that he'd spent over many years trying to heal the pain caused by what Mengele had done to them in the camp. In fact, we found that of the 1,500 sets of twins on whom Mengele had experimented, about 140 were still alive in 1981.

I tried to sue the Mengele family, but we were thrown out of the Federal Court because I couldn't produce evidence that they had been supporting him as a fugitive. Yet it sparked a passion in me, and I kept pursuing what I thought was the case against Mengele, and trying to determine where he was.

Where did you think he was at that time?

I was convinced that Mengele was living the high life in Paraguay, under the then-dictator

// Books and movies propagated the myth that Mengele was hiding in the jungle, with killer dogs and armed guards //



Mengele in his later years. "He wasn't the superhuman Nazi fugitive living the Hollywood version – he was the Nazi doing anything to survive"

Alfredo Stroessner. We knew that he had acquired Paraguayan citizenship in 1959, when he first fled from Argentina, under the name José Mengele – not a very good alias, but good enough to throw those hunting him off the scent. We suspected that he was hiding out in the Chaco region of Paraguay, or perhaps in the heavily German area around Hohenau in the south-east.

A whole range of sightings, books and movies about Mengele – *Marathon Man*, *The Boys from Brazil* – had propagated the myth that he was hiding in the jungle, surrounded by killer dogs and armed guards, riding around in a Mercedes limousine and being funded by his family. That image is one of the reasons he got away – because, instead, he was actually living a very low life in the poorest barrios outside São Paulo, Brazil. He wasn't the superhuman Nazi fugitive living the Hollywood version – he was the Nazi doing anything to survive, and that kept him free.

Amid all this hype and mythologisation, how did you go about finding the truth?

It was known that Mengele had been in Argentina, but nobody knew the details. The Argentine government, which was run for nearly 15 years by a military junta across two periods from 1966 to 1973 and 1976 to 1983, had been asked repeatedly for its Mengele file by the US DoJ, by the Israelis, the British, the West German government – and always ignored that request.

Good research sometimes involves lucky timing. I first visited Buenos Aires in

November 1984, not long after the Falklands War. The military junta had been overthrown, and a new civilian government was in power. I went to the Presidential Palace and made a request in writing for the Mengele file, and talked to a human-rights advisor to the newly elected president. I also sat in a downtown hotel for about three weeks doing interviews.

Then, at about 11pm one night, there was a knock on the hotel-room door. Two members of the Argentine federal police were outside, who told me to come with them. They took me to a blue Ford Falcon – which, as I quickly learned, was not a good sign, because under the military junta blue Falcons had been used for taking away political prisoners.

They took me to their headquarters and to a very grumpy colonel. I didn't know what was happening until I realised he had been ordered by the civilian government to open their Mengele file. On a desk in a side room was a folder detailing 10 years of Mengele's life on the run: his entry into the country, his false passport, his application to the West German embassy, his businesses, his marriage.

It was only later that I realised how lucky I had been. Six weeks after I had gained access to that file, a British journalist applied to see the same material and was rejected. The government had realised that it didn't have to say yes to every request and closed the door. So I'd love to say that I deliberately took advantage of that, but I was mainly just fortunate. And that opportunity then led me to Paraguay and beyond – except for the last, most vital part of the story, when Mengele was in Brazil, because the documents only went up to 1959.

You mentioned that you carried out interviews. Who did you speak to?

In Buenos Aires I interviewed Wilfred Von Oven, an assistant to Joseph Goebbels. I was convinced that he knew Mengele's location, and spent a lot of time trying to get information from him, but got nowhere. Instead he would show me pictures from Miss Nazi contests – and yes, things like that existed at the time down in this little Fourth Reich.

There was a kind of industry in South America in tales about Nazis. So if you were a journalist or lawyer looking for Mengele, people came out of the woodwork to say: "Oh, I used to go bowling with him," or "He taught my child how to speak German." So you had to weave through a minefield. These people weren't asking for money, they just wanted a bit of fame. So two-thirds of the information



Adolf Eichmann stands trial in Jerusalem, 1961, following his capture in Argentina. Mengele fled the country to avoid a similar fate

I pursued in Argentina and Paraguay would have made a great novel, but wasn't useful for finding out what had happened to Mengele.

When did you realise that he was dead?

Not until 1985. The previous year, I had signed a book deal to co-write a biography of Mengele with a British journalist, John Ware. We were halfway through that manuscript – and still believed Mengele was alive – when at about 4.30am one morning, I got a call from a German reporter telling me that bones had been found in Embu, near São Paulo, that were thought to belong to Josef Mengele. I initially thought it was junk – it must have been something like the 12th time that they had apparently found his remains – so my initial reaction wasn't that this was fantastic news. But a day later, I set off for Embu – and while I was there my view started to change.

It was down to another bit of serendipity. News articles had been published revealing that I had the largest private archive on Mengele. And while I was in Embu discussing with the forensic pathologists the authenticity of the bones – which turned out to be real – Mengele's only son, Rolf, showed up at the German publisher of celebrity magazine *Bunte*, offering them what he claimed were thousands of pages of his father's personal diaries from his years on the run, along with correspondence sent to Rolf.

Bunte was tempted but cautious – this was just two years after the publication of the fake 'Hitler Diaries' that had been serialised in the German magazine *Stern* and in *The Sunday Times*, and which had fooled British historian



TOP IMAGE: Documents held by Mengele's son Rolf – seated (right) with Gerald Posner in Germany, 1986 – were key to unlocking the mystery of his final years.

ABOVE: A picture that Rolf took of his father in 1977 on the front cover of *Bunte* in 1985

// People assume that the survivors wanted vengeance, but what they wanted was to know what Mengele did to them at the camp //



Forensic doctor Daniel Muñoz, who led the team that identified Mengele's body in 1985, with his remains at Sao Paulo University's school of medicine. They are now used as teaching aids

Hugh Trevor-Roper. So the publisher decided to have the documents assessed by the German version of the FBI. They also brought in a panel of experts and asked me – because of my huge archive – to be the only non-historian in the group. So in Munich, every day for two weeks, we grilled Rolf Mengele about how he'd obtained the documents, when he'd last seen his father, all the details. It turned out that those documents were real – and I was able to use them in my book.

How did Mengele's survivors react to the news that he was dead?

Many survivors refused to believe it, and I understand that. One said to me, and I'm paraphrasing: "We saw him at his most evil; a God-like figure who controlled life and death. So if there's a one in a million chance that the remains in Brazil are not his, I'll believe it's not him. He's capable of anything."

I was among the people disappointed that the story ended with him getting away. It's often said that putting him on trial wouldn't have led to justice, and that's true – but as Eichmann's trial showed, it would have added so much detail to the historical record.

What was particularly infuriating about Mengele was that he was unrepentant. Until his dying day, he never was sorry for what he had done at Auschwitz. Two years before he died, Rolf visited him in South America to confront him about Auschwitz, and he responded, essentially: "You'll never understand what we were trying to accomplish."

What did Auschwitz survivors want to see happen to Mengele?

People often assume the survivors I spoke to wanted vengeance – to see Mengele pay for his crimes. But what they really wanted was to know what he did to them at the camp: what was injected into them, what experiments he undertook. They knew that he had injected their eyes; that he had done spinal taps without pain relief; that, in some cases, he had even performed amputations. But they didn't know what it was for. Was it for sterilisation? To unlock the mystery of twin births so that German mothers could have more children after the war? Was it to turn dark eyes blue? Mengele didn't leave behind his medical records, so the reasons for those experiments were locked up in his own head.

The only way survivors might find out what had been done, and how to treat themselves as result, was to find out what he had injected into them and why. That was the mystery he held for them – something I had never expected until I started to talk to them.

Decades on, how do you now see this story and your role within it?

For me, the fact that Mengele died of natural causes, swimming off a beach near São Paulo in 1979, is an indictment of the people who should have been looking for him and failed to find him. After the Israelis caught Eichmann in 1960, they closed the book on Nazis, but the West Germans could have broken this case with a simple mail intercept. Mengele

sent letters back to his family, and they were kept by a senior executive in the Mengele firm, who the West Germans knew was a childhood friend. And if they had put a travel notice on Rolf, they would have realised he was travelling under a false document when he went to South America in 1977, and could have easily caught up with Josef.

This was not a difficult case to break – but nobody in the West German prosecutors' offices had the passion or the wherewithal to chase down this ageing Nazi decades after the war and put him on trial for his crimes. The fact that he got away with it isn't because he was so clever, but because those looking for him just didn't have enough desire to undertake the investigation.

Another reason I'd have relished the idea of him on trial is because, in the face of all the Holocaust deniers we've seen emerge in the decades since, Mengele would have spoken in a clear voice about what he did without any apologies. He would have tried to defend his work as a zealous doctor doing experiments in Nazi ideology and racial theory. That, I think, would have been hugely important. **H**

Gerald Posner is an investigative journalist and writer. He co-authored (with John Ware) *Mengele: The Complete Story* (McGraw-Hill, 1986)



Rise of the Nazis: The Manhunt, featuring contributions from Gerald Posner, is due to air this month on BBC Two. Turn to page 81 for details





HATE MAIL

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw an explosion of malicious letters penned by anonymous authors. As **Emily Cockayne** reveals via six cases, these messages often reflected the fears and prejudices that stalked Britain

ILLUSTRATION BY MATT HOLLAND



“Red ink is fit enough I hope ha ha.” So read the infamous first ‘Dear Boss’ letter, written in September 1888 in the aftermath of the first gruesome murders in London’s East End. Penned in red ink and signed ‘Jack the Ripper’, it was sent to a London-based news distribution service. Hoax letters about the crimes continued to appear until 1896.

By that time, unsigned letters – or those signed with initials, symbols or a pseudonym – had become fairly common. Some were intended to unsettle the recipient; others were written to undermine a third person. Letters were sent to individuals, authority figures and even entire communities. Most malicious anonymous letters were concerned with reputation, or were written in response to real or imagined grievances and designed to wreak revenge. Most were destroyed after receipt, but a few became the focus of investigation if they were obscene, threatening or libellous. We can’t be entirely sure what types of people wrote anonymous letters, because we can only analyse those that were investigated, and that sample will reflect the biases, norms and preoccupations of society at the time. However, examining the letters does offer us certain clues.

The introduction in 1840 of the pre-paid Penny Post improved the privacy of the mail, which increased still further in the 1850s with the installation of pillar boxes. In 1870, attention was drawn “to the nuisance that the new half-penny post was likely to become by mischievous persons sending obscene, slanderous, or grossly offensive remarks on the open cards”. Half a century later, during the interwar period, the media fixated on reports of ‘epidemic’ campaigns during a heyday of anonymous letter-writing.

Victorian fears that poor people with ill intent would be likely to send abusive anonymous mail had turned out to be unfounded. Anonymous writers were often affluent men who appeared, outwardly at least, to be respectable members of their communities.

Some messages took the form of tip-off letters, accusing officials of malpractice. In Somerset in 1846, brothers John and William Rees-Mogg (great-great-grandfather of Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg), clerks to the Guardians of the Clutton Poor Law Union, were forced to respond to an anonymous allegation sent to the Poor Law Board that the inmates of the local workhouse were fed dripping in place of butter. They didn’t deny the allegation.

Yet, as the six cases on the following pages show – involving everything from allegations of cattle mutilation to malicious warnings of the imminent implosion of a bank – other letters were more troubling still...



1

A slur on 'spunging sisters'

In 1829, a Georgian gossip cast aspersions on a former artillery officer and his middle-aged siblings

Gentlemen and ladies gossip at a Royal Academy exhibition in 1821. Anonymous letter-writers of the period might try to sully reputations

When sent directly to the target, anonymous letters often tapped into personal shame, identifying a recipient's secrets. In May 1829, Lt Colonel William Granville Eliot, formerly a major in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, received this missive:

Sir, A Gentleman on Blackheath is just returned from Brighton where he heard a Certain Lady spread a report that your sisters two maiden Ladies were kept out of Charity by General Mann and that your Family endeavours to marry into Familys to live and sponge on them.

Gossip about Eliot was already circulating in fashionable circles, declaring that his sisters were freeloading. In passing on this gossip, the letter reinforced and amplified it.

The "Certain Lady" mentioned in the letter was probably Eliot's second wife,

Anne, with whom he was engaged in a legal battle about a pre-nuptial arrangement. General Mann was the father of Eliot's first wife, Harriet, who had died in 1812. As for the "maiden Ladies", they were Eliot's sisters, both now accused of spunging.

So what would drive someone to write such a letter? It's possible that the anonymous author overheard Anne gossiping, and picked up a pen either because they felt duty-bound to inform Eliot so he could take measures to protect his reputation – or because they wanted to deepen Eliot's shame.

Whatever the motivation, the letter speaks to the importance of family honour in polite society in the late Georgian period, when anonymous letters could undermine carefully cultivated constructions of selves. Knowing this, anonymous letter writers used it for their advantage or pleasure.

It's possible that the author overheard Anne gossiping, and wanted to deepen Eliot's shame

2 Beware being buried alive!

A short, splotchy note suggested that a woman's son, believed dead, should not yet be interred

Perhaps in a "trance" or Coma, don't bury yet – the other Curate was reported dead – some time since

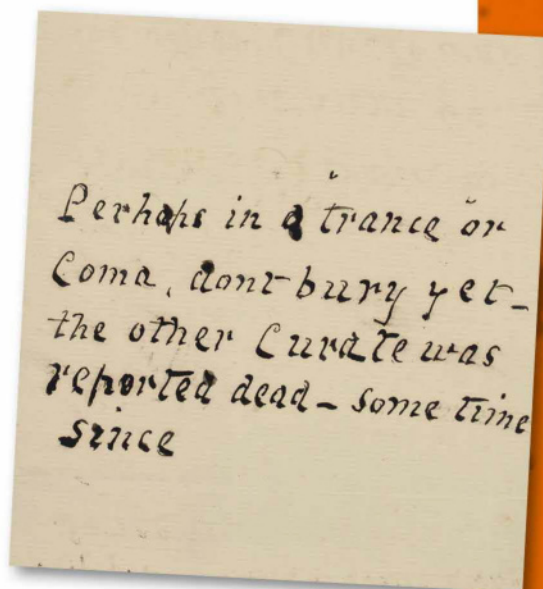
This note was sent in 1894 to Mary Cokayne, wife of the famous genealogist George, who received it a few days after her son, Morton, had died. The letter implies that Morton, an assistant curate, might have been buried alive.

Why send such a note to a grieving mother? Once that moral shock has registered, perhaps the next question is not "Who wrote it?" but "To what other curate does it refer?" Then there are fundamental questions about the document itself. Why did Mary Cokayne retain it? It must have

brought her sadness. Was it kept as evidence, in case more letters arrived?

We don't know who wrote this letter, so can only guess at their motivation, but it is likely that it was sent by someone with a grievance against Mary or her family, or who was somehow invested in local religious matters. There are similarities here with modern-day 'flamers' – people who post insults online, hoping to inflame readers – and to people who, posting anonymously on online memorial pages, taunt the bereaved.

Was this letter to Mary a warning, or was it actually a threat – a suggestion that some family history was known to the writer, and could be exposed? Studying such anonymous letters might give clues about how online abuse and trolling could develop, and how it can be managed.



A brief, rather cryptic note delivered to Mary Cokayne in 1894 implies that her son might be in an unconscious state – like the "other Curate... reported dead"

3 Secret prejudice

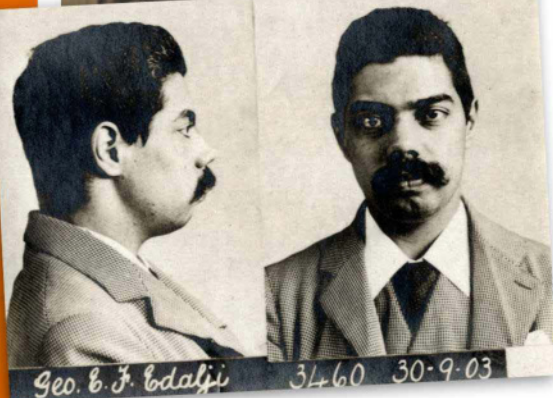
Letters addressed to an Indian-born clergyman's family led to his son's conviction for a spate of livestock mutilations

In the last decades of the Victorian era, a nightmarish volley of letters, likely fuelled by racism, circulated in the South Staffordshire mining village of Great Wyrley. The episode reveals the paranoia that such letters could provoke – and how investigations could provide a cover for prejudice.

In 1888, the household of Shapurji Edalji, an Indian-born clergyman, received the first of hundreds of anonymous and pseudonymous letters, with others sent to families nearby. Suspecting the vicar's son, George Edalji – then a schoolboy – of penning the letters, police set watch on the vicarage. One letter sent to the Edaljis' teenage maid explicitly referred to her "Black master". From 1893, the letters' tone became darker: some contained religious rants, while others included death threats. Some intimated that the local police were in on a conspiracy. One letter began: "My Dear Shapurji, — I have great pleasure in informing you that it is now our intention to renew the persecution of the Vicar!!! (shame) of Great Wyrley." Written in the first-person plural, some letters implied a larger conspiracy or a "gang of scoundrels".

In 1903, the mutilations of several cattle, sheep and horses was dubbed the 'Great Wyrley Outrages'. By then, George was 27, and working as a solicitor in Birmingham, but was drawn back into village affairs. An anonymous postcard sent from Wolverhampton in August 1903 advised him to go back to his "old game of writing anonymous letters and killing cows". This clearly reflected local sentiment and, though he had solid alibis, an investigation focused on George as the prime suspect for the attacks. He was tried, convicted on weak evidential grounds and sentenced to seven years.

Arthur Conan Doyle, interested in the case, employed a handwriting expert to prove George's innocence. The police, presumably annoyed at what they viewed as the author's meddling in the case, instigated a conspiracy against him, involving fabricated pseudonymous letters. Captain Anson of the Staffordshire Constabulary wrote one fictitious letter, signing it "A Nark", and boasting of "a vein of humour running through it which I fear was quite lost on the somewhat obtuse recipient". George was released in 1906, and pardoned the next year.



A mugshot of George Edalji after his arrest on charges of livestock mutilation. His father (above) had earlier received many anonymous letters

4 Breaking the bank

When a typewritten letter warned of imminent bank collapse, account holders were consumed by a mass panic

New technology enabled letters to be produced without writing by hand. In November 1910, somebody typed a warning to depositors at a London bank. Signing their letter “A Friend”, the author wrote: “I beg you to withdraw your deposit from the Birkbeck Bank, as I have heard on sound authority that the company are in very low water and there may be a run on the bank any day.” As a result, anxious account holders rushed to withdraw their savings, forming lengthy queues at the bank.

Using a typewriter was by no means an infallible method for evading identification. A machine’s alignment and the condition of the type created consistent artefacts on a typed page that could be used as

evidence of authorship – provided the typewriter could be found and linked to an individual.

Experts deduced that the Birkbeck Bank letter had been typed on a four- or five-year-old Remington No 7 typewriter, with a carriage “running sluggishly”. The type-bar bearing the ‘o’ was bent or loose, so the letter was not flush with other characters, and the upper-case C was ‘worn’. Despite these clues, and a £200 reward for information, nobody was charged. The Birkbeck Bank went into receivership in the summer of 1911.

Such tip-offs might have reflected genuine concern, but also might indicate a malicious competitiveness that undermined dealings in the banking industry at the time.



Account-holders throng the streets outside the Birkbeck Bank after an anonymous 1910 letter had sparked a run on the financial institution



5 Loathe thy neighbour

Several women were convicted of sending obscene letters to neighbours – who actually penned the decoy notes themselves

Before the 1910s, obscene or threatening letters had been primarily associated with men. Then a shift occurred, and ‘poison pen’ letters written by women became a focus of media and police obsession. This wasn’t because more were being written by women, but because they were easier to prosecute (having fewer resources and less access to legal support) and such actions were deemed more scandalous, contrary to societal expectations of femininity and unladylike behaviour. When such letters proved to have been sent by the recipients’ neighbours, their perceived corrosive impact on the community only increased.

Letters that included explicit language and threats baffled investigators and excited reporters, especially when women also sent decoy letters to themselves, designed to frame another person. In general, female suspects faced greater scrutiny than their male counterparts. One, Annie Tugwell from Sutton, was watched by three policemen over the course of three weeks in 1913, each positioned at a different vantage point, in an extravagant undercover operation.

A notable feature of decoy cases was a police reluctance to look beyond an initial suspect – usually a woman deemed ‘rough’. In the 1910s, letters written by (and to)



Edith Swan (main picture, far right) accused Rose Gooding (below, left) of sending her obscene letters – but was herself the author



What do malicious letters tell us about Victorian Britain? Emily will discuss this subject in more detail on our podcast: historyextra.com/podcast



Ephraim 'Jock' Dodds, right, playing for Sheffield United against West Ham. After his transfer to Blackpool in 1939, he complained about anonymous letters he'd received

6

Victims of foul play

Footballers were among the celebrities who received anonymous hate mail from over-passionate fans in the 1930s

Eliza Woodman in Redhill, Surrey framed her neighbour, Mary Johnson, who was twice falsely convicted of libel and hounded out of town.

A similar scenario played out in the seaside resort of Littlehampton in the 1920s, when Rose Gooding was accused by her neighbour, Edith Swan, of sending obscene letters. Police refused to believe that the respectable-seeming Swan could write such "indescribably filthy letters", including some sent to herself. Gooding, perceived as having looser morals, was twice falsely convicted, in 1920 and 1921.

Though new evidence came to light, an appeal failed. Eventually, an inspector from Scotland Yard intervened. He considered Swan, the only other viable suspect, to be "peculiar". A surveillance operation was launched, involving marked stamps, a hidden mirror in a postbox, and a female police officer hiding in a shed. Searches uncovered blotting paper that incriminated Swan, who was found guilty in 1923. Yet Gooding still faced hostility, and was stigmatised by the community.

Often, the attribution of poison pen letters was the result of societal biases, gender expectations and the notion of the 'poisonous' woman. Johnson and Gooding were both swiftly found guilty of crimes they did not commit, simply because they *seemed* less respectable than their neighbours.

The interwar years saw a rise in hate mail sent to celebrities including the car manufacturer Herbert Austin and the author and campaigner Marie Stopes, as well as prominent footballers.

A number of Bolton Wanderers players received anonymous letters from over-invested fans. Many were weeded out before reaching their intended recipients – but not all. In December 1937 centre-forward Jack Milson sought a transfer, believing that the crowd was "not with him" after crank letters attacked his "type of play". And after his transfer to Blackpool in 1939, Ephraim 'Jock' Dodds, formerly of Sheffield United, wrote of anonymous letters he'd received.

Players were not the only people singled out for attack – management was also

targeted. The vice-chairman of Torquay United resigned from his seat on the board in November 1937 following a year-long campaign of letters whose authors disguised their identities by typing, writing in block letters or using pencil. One, signed 'Shareholder', asked: "Any wonder the team don't win with you and them drinking?"

In 1938, Sir Francis Joseph, chairman of Stoke City, observed that "anonymous letters and postcards pour in when matches are lost". Football was an important part of community life, and fans invested much emotion in their local teams. Some letters sent to clubs reveal a sense of community involvement and a need to feel part of decision-making, but also ultimately reveal a marginality and powerlessness in some parts of interwar society.

During the 1930s, attention increasingly focused on the behaviour of celebrities. When stories about them were reported by the national press, many started to receive anonymous letters. These stories demonstrate the interplay between the national media and anonymous writers – and how one could feed off the other. **H**

Bolton Wanderers centre-forward Jack Milson sought a transfer after crank letters attacked his "type of play"

Emily Cockayne is associate professor in early modern history at the University of East Anglia. Her new book, *Penning Poison: A History of Anonymous Letters* (Oxford University Press), is published in September

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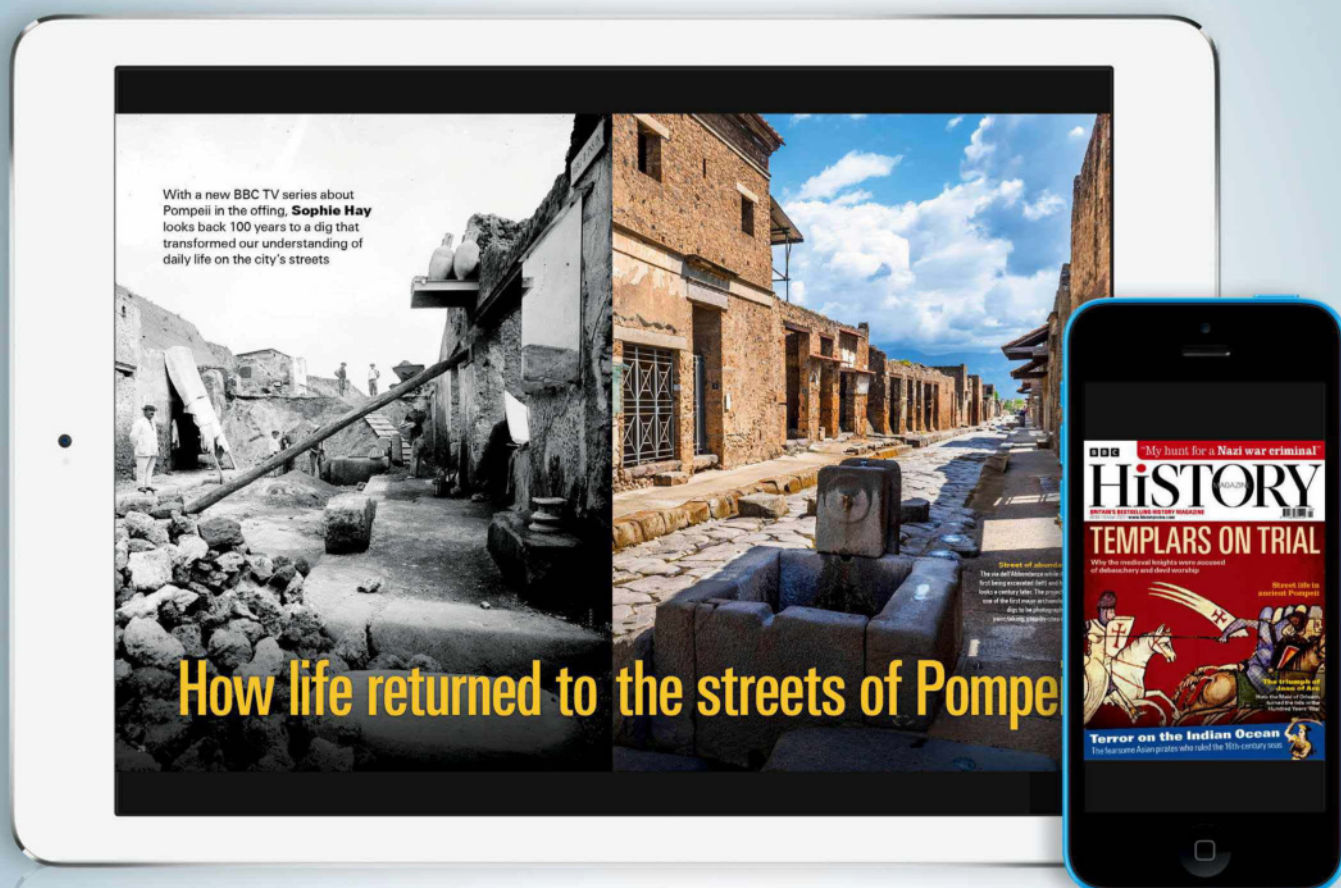
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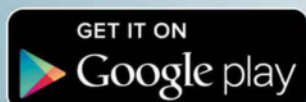
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BBC **HiSTORY** MAGAZINE



Golden boy

Over the past 200 years, Dick Whittington has become one of Britain's best-loved pantomime heroes. Yet, as **Michael McCarthy** tells **Jon Bauckham**, the real-life story that inspired Dick's rags to riches tale is even more remarkable than the fiction

Upwardly mobile

A 1618 engraving of Richard Whittington, who served as mayor of London four times from 1397. His illustrious career inspired the tale of the boy who moved to the capital in search of streets paved with gold





Every Christmas, British theatres are taken over by a 'usual suspects' roster of pantomimes: *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Aladdin* and *Snow White* being among the most common.

But while many of these stories are based on fables or fairy tales, one much-loved production – *Dick Whittington*, the story of the boy who heads for London in search of streets paved with gold – draws a surprising portion of its narrative from real-life events.

The titular 'Dick' is based on Richard Whittington, the medieval mayor of London who, just like his panto counterpart, left his home in the countryside and made his fortune in the big smoke. But how much of the story, which has captivated theatre-goers for centuries, is drawn from reality? And how much is plucked from the realm of fantasy? And, perhaps most importantly, did Whittington really have a pet cat?

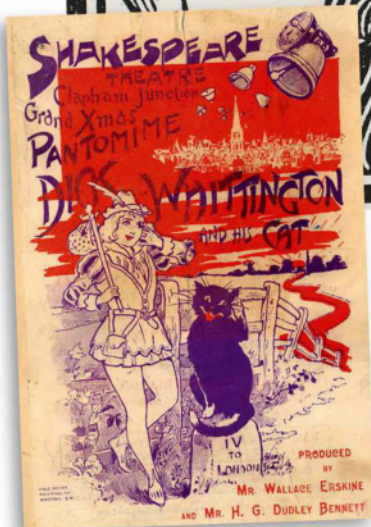
These are questions that have long fascinated Michael McCarthy, author of *Citizen of London: Richard Whittington, The Boy Who Would Be Mayor*, the first major study of Richard Whittington in several decades. The book sees McCarthy providing a detailed account of the real Whittington's remarkable rise to prominence, which is no mean feat given the difficulties of piecing together aspects of Whittington's early life.

"Whittington first arrived in London around 20 years after the Black Death, which had peaked in Europe in the mid-14th century," says McCarthy. "However, the problem we have is that the pandemic killed around 50 per cent of England's rural clergy, who were the main people responsible for the recording of births, marriages, deaths and other key events at this time. Due to the turbulence of the period, many of the records you would normally expect to find simply haven't survived."

Fortunately, by working backwards from later documents, McCarthy has deduced that Richard was born around the year 1358. And, in contrast to the impoverished pantomime character, Whittington certainly wasn't of poor stock. In fact, he hailed from a prosperous family in Gloucestershire, and his father – Sir William Whittington – had represented the county in parliament.

Learning his trade

Tragically, William died around the time of Richard's birth, leaving his widow, Joan, to raise the couple's children on her own. But if Whittington thought he was going to live a comfortable life on the back of his father's



Fact and fiction A woodcut showing part of the story of Dick Whittington from an 18th-century chapbook (above), and (inset) a 20th-century poster advertising the tale that has become a staple of Britain's pantomime season

In contrast to the impoverished pantomime character, Whittington certainly wasn't of poor stock

wealth, then he was very much mistaken. As the youngest of three sons, he was unable to benefit from the tradition of primogeniture, so was instead forced to make his own fortune. To this end, he was sent away to become an apprentice to Sir Ivo Fitzwarin, influential as a military figure, courtier and mercer, when he was about 10 to 12 years old.

"Whittington's mother, by now a single parent, would have likely gone to consult local mercers in the city of Gloucester, asking for their recommendations about who she should send her son to," explains McCarthy. "Or, if she had already made her decision, she would have wanted to know that she was correct in the judgments she was making. But the Fitzwarin connection also ran deeper: Whittington's father had served as a knight under Fitzwarin's father during the Hundred Years' War."

Whether Whittington would have been aware of these military connections before he set foot in London is unknown, but it seems he soon settled into the life of a young apprentice. Taking up residence in the



How did Richard Whittington make his fortune? Hear more from Jon Bauckham's interview with Michael McCarthy at: historyextra.com/whittington-pod



His master's blessing

A woodcut from the same chapbook shows a young Richard Whittington bowing to London mercer Sir Ivo Fitzwarin, to whom he was apprenticed from a young age

Fitzwarin household, he shadowed his master and became skilled in the art of selling expensive textiles – such as silks and velvets – to London's great and good. Importantly, he also began exporting raw wool to Florence and Venice, where it was turned into cloth of the finest quality. In contrast to the pantomime, Whittington's story is perhaps best described as a tale of luxury fabrics, rather than rags, to riches.

Upwardly mobile

Serving under Fitzwarin enabled Whittington to meet two hugely significant people in his life: Fitzwarin's daughter, Alice, whom he went on to marry at some point between 1402 and 1410, and Richard II, to whom he was introduced in 1379. As Whittington began building his own fortune, he even started acting as the monarch's private moneylender. But it wasn't just the king who came knocking.

"The Hundred Years' War, combined with the upheaval caused by the Black Death, meant that London was in a state of social flux, with land changing hands on a frequent basis," explains McCarthy. "However, unlike some of his contemporaries, who went round buying up houses along the Thames, Whittington kept his money liquid and developed a reputation for integrity; he was trusted. So, over time, very senior people



Trading places Textile, gold and silver merchants peddle their wares in a 14th-century illustration. Dick Whittington made his mark on society by selling silks and velvets to London's movers and shakers

The real-life Dick Whittington



Royal patronage Richard II, shown in a c1390 portrait, would become a useful ally to Whittington – as would his cousin, arch-rival and successor, Henry IV

began approaching him for loans. I wouldn't say that he was opportunistic, but he was certainly far-sighted and intelligent enough to use these connections to his advantage."

By the final decade of the 14th century, Whittington's star was truly in its ascendancy. In 1393, having already gained valuable experience as a common councillor, he was appointed sheriff of the City of London, which put him in prime position to land one of the most important roles of all.

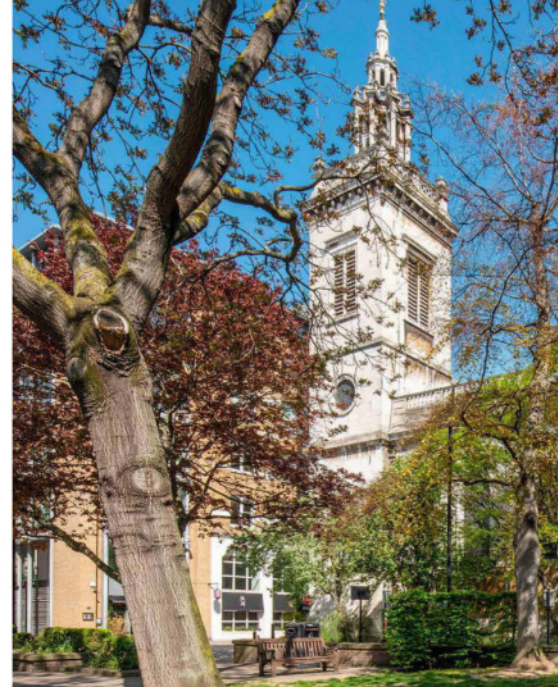
"In the summer of 1397, the mayor of London, Adam Bamme, died in office," says McCarthy. "Bamme had been a very popular mayor, having saved Londoners from starvation by negotiating an important grain deal some years before. But Richard II, who was deeply unpopular within the city, did not want to wait around for another election and feared instability. Instead, he turned to Whittington, by then a highly respected figure, and installed him in the post."

Despite effectively being a caretaker mayor, Whittington proved that he was more than worthy of carrying on in the role on a permanent basis. After serving out the brief remainder of Bamme's term, Whittington

was formally elected mayor of London in the autumn of 1397. In total, he would serve in the post four times, winning further elections in 1406 and 1419. The erroneous assertion in the pantomime, which sees Whittington becoming "thrice mayor of London", stems from a basic historical error: whoever first coined that catchy phrase neglected to include his first stint filling in for his late predecessor.

As Whittington moved from early adulthood into middle age, he continued to serve

**When he died in
March 1423,
Whittington left
his entire fortune
to charity**



Gone but not forgotten Whittington's name lives on in London's Whittington Garden – next to his burial place of St Michael Paternoster Royal church (above) – and Whittington Hospital (right)

as a supplier and moneylender to royalty – even in the cut and thrust world of medieval kingship. In fact, when Richard II was deposed by Henry Bolingbroke in 1399, Whittington did not find himself banished from the court: quite the opposite. Having already been a long-standing client, Bolingbroke carried on using Whittington's services even after he had taken the throne as Henry IV. Then, when Bolingbroke's son Henry V became king in 1413, Whittington's relationship with the crown only deepened, and he was even tasked with overseeing construction of a new roof at Westminster Abbey.

Man of the people

Despite his royal affiliations, Whittington felt his strongest sense of duty to the ordinary people of London. During his time as mayor, and in other civic roles, he embarked on several public building projects, including a ward for unmarried mothers at St Thomas' Hospital and even a block of public toilets, known as the 'Longhouse', which survived until the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Whittington also took a personal interest in improving the lives of the capital's prisoners, as McCarthy explains. "Very early on in his career, Whittington developed a huge anger and distaste for London's prisons, and in particular Newgate, which was horribly filthy and overcrowded. As his wealth grew, he made it his mission to see that the prison was rebuilt – something that was achieved shortly after his death."

Much of Whittington's philanthropy occurred posthumously, because, when he died in March 1423, he left his entire fortune to charity.



“Whittington’s wife Alice had already died, and the couple had not produced any children,” explains McCarthy. “So in 1421, Whittington began writing up his will with help from his friend, John Carpenter, who he also named as his chief executor. But that’s not all: Whittington placed Carpenter in charge of a four-man task and finish group, entrusted with spending Whittington’s money after he had passed away.”

Worth £7,000 – or around £7m in modern terms – Whittington’s bequest was enormous not only in volume, but also in the sheer breadth of how it was distributed. Remarkably, six centuries after his death, his generosity is still reflected across London today.

Today we still have a Whittington College, now based at Felgate; a Whittington Hospital, established in 1473; and a Whittington NHS Trust that oversees it. In London, there are schools, parks and community facilities named after Whittington. Six centuries after he changed the face of the capital, the name of this extraordinary individual lives on. **H**

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

Michael McCarthy is the author of *Citizen of London: Richard Whittington, The Boy Who Would Be Mayor* (Hurst, 2022). He was talking to Jon Bauckham, production editor on *BBC History Revealed* magazine



Michael will be speaking about Whittington at the **Gloucester History Festival**, of which we are a media partner: gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

PANTOMIME HERO

How a medieval merchant morphed into an icon of the stage – and where his legendary cat comes in

Richard Whittington certainly deserves to be more than a mere footnote in London’s history. But how did his story become synonymous with dames, horse costumes and frenzied shouts of “it’s behind you”?

The answer to that question, it seems, lies in a mixture of oral tradition and the written word. While the pantomime character of Dick Whittington didn’t properly develop until the early 19th century, versions of the story were already circulating soon after the real Whittington’s death.

“Thirteen years after he died, Whittington was described by an unnamed poet as the ‘sonne of marchandy’ – the ultimate mercer, if you will,” says Michael McCarthy. “But it seems that the story really started to take off around the 1530s, when some of his good works were beginning to bear fruit, through the auspices of the Mercers’ Company and other institutions that he had founded. Playwrights were starting to hook on to his tale and think, ‘There’s an interesting story to be told here’.”

The story of the benevolent mayor was still doing the rounds among writers of the Stuart period, with evidence that Whittington’s life formed the basis of both a ‘drama play’ and a ballad in 1604 and 1605 respectively. And, according to a diary entry from September 1668, even Samuel Pepys recalled an outing to “Southwarke-Fair”, where

he watched “the puppet-show of Whittington, which was pretty to see”.

By the 17th century, Whittington was no longer a boy from noble stock, as in real life, but a poor country lad who is said to have absconded from his master’s household, only to have been lured back by the sound of Bow Bells calling him to “turn again” and fulfil his destiny as “thrice lord mayor of London”.

But what about Whittington’s beloved pet cat, who, in the pantomime, secures the boy his fortune after being sold to the sultan of a distant, rat-infested kingdom?

“There is no evidence to suggest that Whittington owned a cat,” reveals McCarthy. “However, is it possible that a young apprentice, entrusted with looking after parts of his master’s household, would have owned a cat as part of efforts to keep rats at bay? Absolutely. Whittington was serving his apprenticeship only 20 years after the Black Death, and would likely have been responsible for going into the cellars and hallways and keeping them free of vermin.”

McCarthy sees Whittington’s fabled feline companion as a possible allegory. “Cats were not only associated with witchcraft, they were also connected to good luck, so I don’t think it’s an accident that some versions of the story used the cat as the device that makes Whittington his fortune.”



The cast of *Dick Whittington* on stage at the Birmingham Hippodrome. The tale of the benevolent mayor has captivated theatre-goers since the 17th century

Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

Why didn't the revolutions of 1848 spread to Britain?

►► The revolutions across much of Europe in 1848 were driven by three decades of building pressure for the political rights of national communities. This united a cross-class coalition of many different radicals, who were spurred into action by the general upheaval of an economic crisis. Unaccountable autocratic governments were their targets – especially those, like the Habsburgs, who ruled a complex mix of nationalities while remaining alien to most of them.

However, Britain had forged a different path across these decades. Its national identity was securely grounded in institutions that offered the voting public a voice – and when a cross-class coalition for radical change developed around 1830, the 1832 Reform Act had neatly divided it, giving the middle classes the franchise and strengthening their desire to defend the status quo.

There was plenty of fuel for upheaval within British society: bitter poverty born of employers' exploitation had haunted the years of the 'Hungry Forties', and put an edge of desperation on the reforming ambitions of the new Chartist mass movement. But only a minority of Chartists were willing to contemplate anything more than 'moral force' as a means of change, and the British state was remarkably effective at surveilling and infiltrating any groups that might pose a violent threat. The Chartists made one last attempt at a 'monster petition' for reform in April 1848, but the 20,000 to 25,000 demonstrators were outnumbered more than eight to one by the 'special constables' enrolled to keep them in order.

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David Andress, professor of modern history at the University of Portsmouth



Supporters of the Chartist movement gather in London, April 1848. Such meetings were heavily monitored by the British state, who cracked down on any groups who might pose a risk of violence



Around 4 million people are said to have gathered in Rome for the funeral of Pope John Paul II in April 2005

Who had the largest funeral in history?

►► In Britain, the Duke of Wellington, Queen Victoria, Winston Churchill and Queen Elizabeth II, for instance, all had massive send-offs – but they wouldn't even make the global top 10.

For sheer numbers, someone from the modern era would win. Indian politician CN Annadurai's 1969 funeral reputedly had 15 million mourners, while Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini's in 1989 attracted 10 million, a sixth of Iran's population. The funerals of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il (2011) and Pope John Paul II (2005) were also huge.

In terms of the scale of the funeral ceremony, ancient Egyptian rulers often had elaborate funerals with long mourning periods, while the obsequies of the first Qin emperor of China included interment in a massive mausoleum, terracotta warriors and all, plus (according to legend) the execution of numerous concubines and the deaths of everyone privy to the tomb's secrets.

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Eugene Byrne, journalist and author

ALAMY

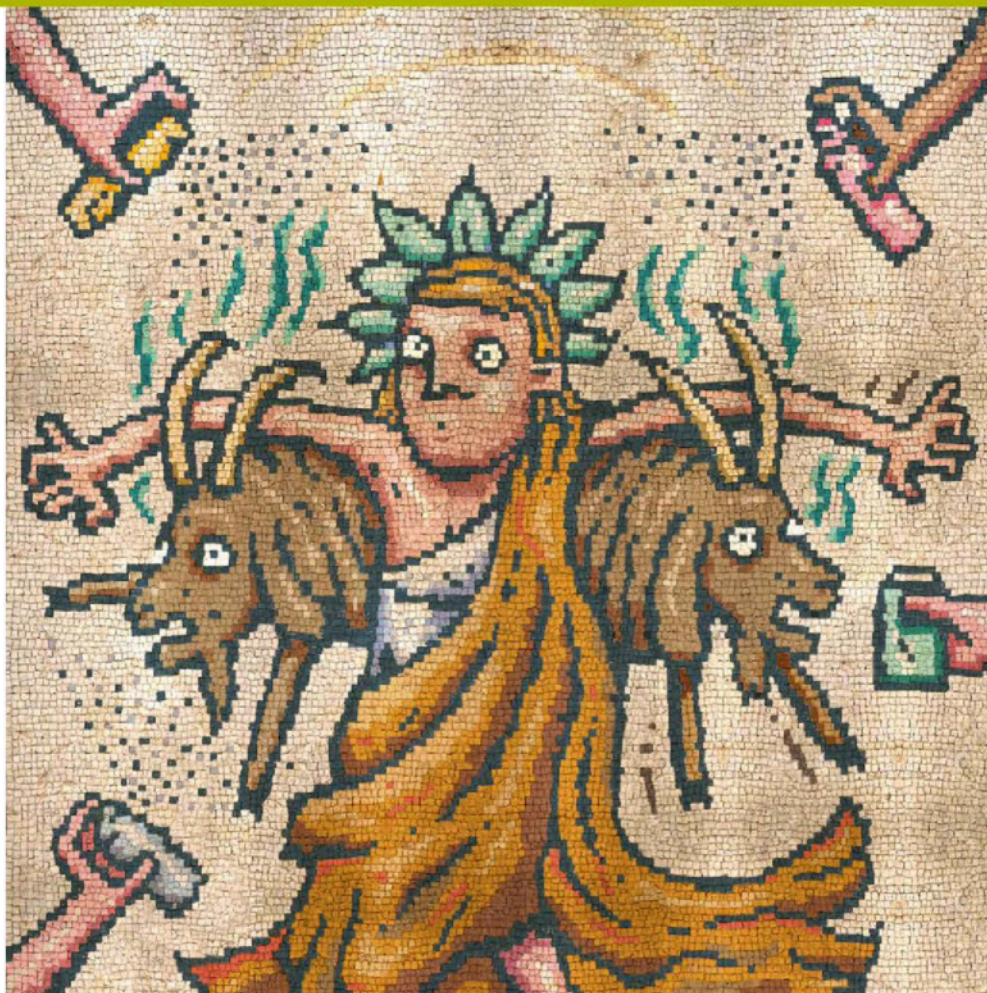


ILLUSTRATION BY @GLENMCILLUSTRATION

What did people use before deodorant?

»» While commercial products didn't emerge until the 1880s, there has never been a time before the use of deodorants, which mask smells (as opposed to antiperspirants, which control wetness). Even in ancient times there were many options to avoid letting the "rude goat find its way beneath your arms" – as Ovid memorably put it in *The Art of Love*. So what were they?

Well, a thorough wash – whether at home, in a river or in a public bath house – was a good start. Skin would be cleansed with oils or soap (attested to since at least 2800 BC) and then fragranced with perfumes and other scented substances, including aromatic woods, flowers, and fruit juices mixed with spices. The clothes you wore could also make a difference, as both linens and wool have natural anti-bacterial properties. Changing frequently – especially the layers closest to your skin – would also help prevent odour build-up. Alternatively, the use of dress shields (cotton pads placed in the armpit area) helped protect fabric from sweat.

There were also some deodorising recipes, from a mixture of lettuce, myrrh and incense mentioned in Egyptian medical texts, to recipes using alum – a naturally occurring astringent containing aluminium and potassium sulphates – and honey that were favoured in Roman times.

The transition to commercial products was a gradual process, and early formulations posed challenges such as irritation, staining and residue. It wasn't until the 1920s that deodorants became common, and not until the 1950s that they became widely adopted, albeit at varying rates across the world.

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Lucy Jane Santos, freelance writer, historian and consultant

Coffee was heavily taxed and regulated in 18th-century Prussia, leading to a clampdown on illicit consumption



DID YOU KNOW...?

Against the odds

A Bohemian civil servant, Filip Fabricius, was granted the title of Baron von Hohenfall ('Baron of the High Fall') because he had once been thrown out of a window in Prague Castle. In May 1618, Fabricius and two Catholic noblemen were cornered by Protestants angered by attacks on their religious beliefs and hurled through the window in what became known as the Defenestration of Prague. Astonishingly, despite falling some 21 metres, all three men survived the experience.



Dandy highwayman

A highwayman, Nathaniel Hawes, refused to enter a plea at his London trial because those who had captured him had, he said, "Seized a suit of fine clothes which I intended to have gone to the gallows in". Pressed with weights of up to 250 pounds to persuade him to change his mind, he gave in and pleaded 'not guilty'. The judge disagreed. Hawes was convicted and, dressed in what clothes he had, was hanged at Tyburn in December 1721.

Caffeine cops

In late 18th-century Prussia, Frederick the Great's government employed a small army of 'coffee sniffers' (*Kaffeeschnüffler*) whose job was to roam the country, literally sniffing out the roasting of coffee beans. The king had not only increased the tax on coffee but also decreed that only state-owned roasting plants could legally operate. The *Kaffeeschnüffler*, who numbered about 400 and were mostly veterans of Frederick's many wars, were used to detect law-breakers and those ignoring the government's monopoly on coffee roasting. **1**

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Nick Rennison, writer and journalist specialising in history

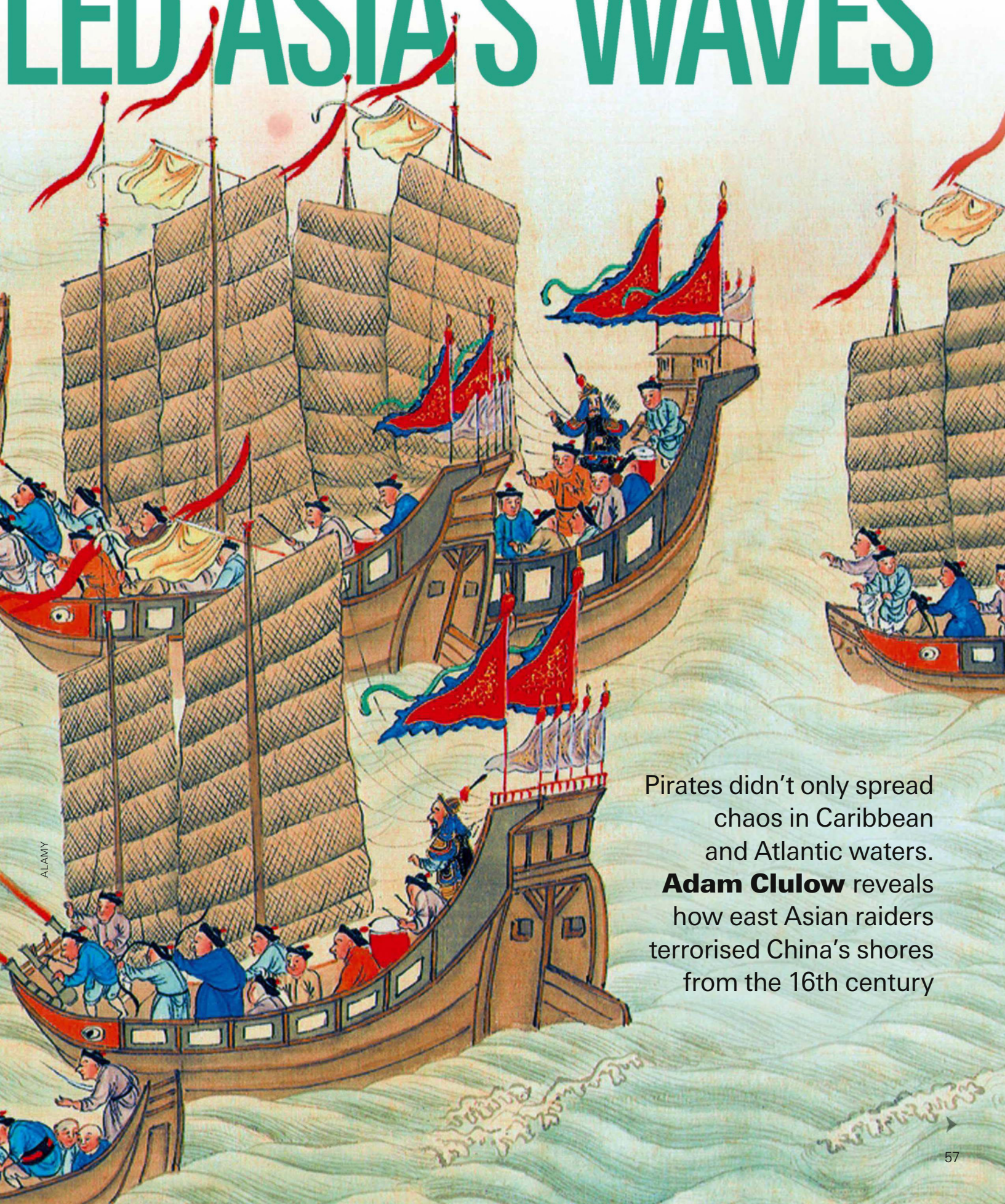
WHEN PIRATES RU



From pirate to protector

The 19th-century scroll *Pacifying the South China Sea* shows ex-pirate Zhang Bao leading the Qing navy into battle against his former partners in crime. The most successful pirates were able to use their formidable naval power to secure a settlement with the state

LED ASIA'S WAVES



Pirates didn't only spread chaos in Caribbean and Atlantic waters. **Adam Clulow** reveals how east Asian raiders terrorised China's shores from the 16th century

Pirates of East Asia

Spring 1553 brought terror to large swathes of the coast. Settlements along the shore were hit with successive assaults from the sea as, in “the third month... [pirates launched] a large campaign to attack [the coast]. The combined fleet consisted of several hundred warships that covered the sea.”

This account, which goes on to list the towns and cities that fell to the marauders’ depredations, gives a sense of the scale of these raids, describing a vast armada of pirate vessels carrying thousands of men.

These large-scale series of raids weren’t launched on the Spanish Main by Caribbean buccaneers or by Barbary corsairs in the Mediterranean. In fact, the description comes from the *Mingshi*, a history of the Ming dynasty in China. It recounts an attack by so-called wakō, or Japanese pirates, under the command of their leader Wang Zhi, who assembled huge fleets for raids on the coast.

Piracy has always been a global phenomenon. For millennia, pirates have preyed on rich shipping lanes and vulnerable coastal settlements. Although European pirates dominate the popular imagination, east Asia – particularly China and Japan – was one of the great centres of historical piracy.

East Asian piracy was vast in scale and reach. It was also stunningly persistent with successive waves of large-scale piracy. And it was strikingly cosmopolitan, with multi-ethnic crews straddling national boundaries. In the 16th century, huge pirate fleets consisting of hundreds of vessels ransacked the Chinese coast. Although dressed as ferocious Japanese warriors, most of these pirates were in fact Chinese, and they were led by Chinese entrepreneurs based in Japan.

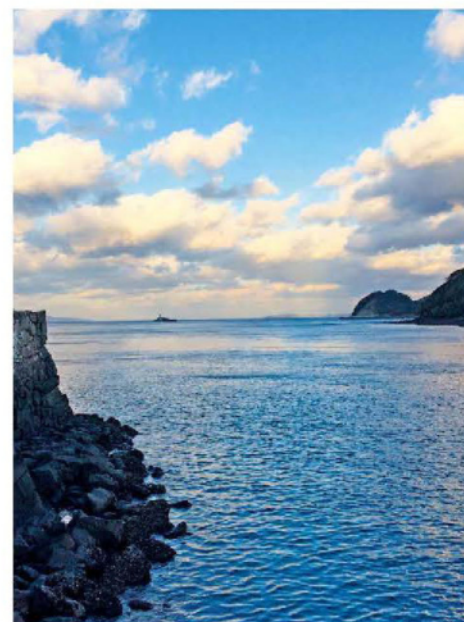
Then, in the 17th century, a new pirate king created a maritime organisation that would come to challenge the Dutch East India Company, eventually invading Taiwan and ejecting the Dutch from their prized east Asian colony. And in the 19th century, a Chinese female leader emerged from the Cantonese sex trade to command tens of thousands of pirates.

Cycle of crime

For most people today, the default image of a historical pirate is based on notorious European outlaws such as Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard. Such figures, who were active primarily in the Caribbean and the Atlantic, became so well-known because writers like Captain Charles Johnson, author of the bestselling 1724 book *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*, created a larger-than-life image that penetrated deep into the popular imagina-



Waves of terror Pirates prepare for a shore raid in a scene from the Ming-dynasty *Wakō zukan* scroll



Raiders' lair Hirado harbour in western Japan. This was an active centre for pirates for decades

tion. But these mariners who operated during what's now called the Golden Age of Piracy – spanning the later 17th and early 18th centuries – were generally not very successful. Their careers were short and violent, marked by the occasional seizure of rich vessels but usually ending in capture or execution. By contrast, east Asian pirates developed organisations that, at their zenith, looked a lot like actual states with huge resources and reach.

Historians who work on pirates talk about a piracy cycle – applicable globally, but key to understanding east Asian pirates. According to this model, pirates transitioned through four stages as they became more successful. In the first stage, small, fragmented groups emerged, usually drawing support from impoverished coastal populations. They engaged in low-level piracy using one or two vessels, attacking vulnerable ships or



Island strife Ming dynasty troops advance on pirate forces in Taiwan, in a scene from a 16th-century scroll painting. Though wakō pirates built up large fleets of ships, these were mostly used to launch raids on land

settlements but with little organisation or staying power. In this phase, pirates were little more than small-scale parasites, preying on commerce but with limited capacity to inflict serious damage.

Although most east Asian pirates never escaped this phase, the more successful ones transitioned to stage two of the cycle, which saw significant organisation and growth. Fuelled by plunder, pirate leaders amassed small fleets, allowing them to target richer targets. This in turn gave them access to more resources, enabling further growth.

Once they reached stage three, pirate fleets could consist of hundreds of vessels and tens of thousands of pirates. Such groups required clear rules, structures and even fully formed bureaucracies to manage income and resources. Contrary to popular ideas, most pirates were not political revolutionaries seeking to create alternative orders or maritime utopias. Rather, they developed strict hierarchies that funnelled plunder upwards to key leaders, while ensuring their crews remained well fed and armed.

At this stage, pirates faced a crucial test. Established states recognised that such groups, with their powerful fleets and tens of thousands of fighters, posed a dangerous threat that must be co-opted or defeated. In stage four of the piracy cycle, then, pirates could form their own de facto states – and indeed some successful east Asian pirates did precisely this. Or they could seek recognition by, or integration into, powerful Asian states.

If they could successfully navigate this dif-

ficult transition, pirate leaders could morph from outlaws into admirals, and their fleets into state navies. But making this final leap proved perilous, even for the most successful.

Dawn of the ‘dwarf raiders’

East Asian pirates have a long history; scattered references stretch back thousands of years. But something changed in the 14th century, when huge fleets of pirates attacked Korea, ranging far inland and challenging the state. These pirates were known by two Chinese characters, 倭寇, which can be pronounced as wokou in Chinese, waegu in Korean or wakō in Japanese. It’s a derogatory term for Japanese people that is sometimes translated as ‘dwarf raiders’.

These wakō raids, to use the Japanese pronunciation, started small and were easily resisted. But they swiftly grew as pirate leaders transitioned to stages two and three of the piracy cycle. In c1370, wakō pirates attacked a Korean province, destroying 30 warships and taking the tax grain accumulated by the state. And in 1374, a massive fleet of 350 wakō ships struck the Korean coast, burning down an army barracks and killing thousands of soldiers.

Who were these so-called ‘dwarf raiders’? Their bases were in western Japan, which was convulsed by successive natural disasters including famines and pandemics. But Murai Shōsuke, a leading historian of medieval Japan, suggests that we should rethink what he calls a “nationality-oriented approach” to the wakō. Instead, Murai argues that we should think of these pirates as members of marginal maritime communities that straddled different national boundaries and cannot be easily fitted into modern categories.

By the 16th century, Japan was famous as a global centre for piracy. Indeed, Japan and Korea appear on some European maps of this period as *Ilhas dos Ladrones* – in Portuguese, the ‘Isles of Pirates’. From the 1520s, pirate chiefs based in Japan assembled large fleets with the aim of launching attacks against targets located primarily in China. Raids peaked between 1550 and 1560, when 467 were recorded – including the massive coastal assault under Wang Zhi described at the start of this article – before gradually declining over the following three decades.

In 1374, a massive fleet of 350 wakō pirate ships struck the Korean coast, burning down an army barracks and killing thousands of soldiers

Pirates of East Asia

Despite the size of their fleets, the wakō were essentially bandits operating on shore, using their ships primarily for transportation. Having landed, fighters fanned out to attack vulnerable settlements before returning to their vessels with plunder. The Ming dynasty *Wakō zukan* – the most famous pictorial representation of such pirates – provides a compelling illustration of the progress of one raid.

This long hand scroll (see p58) depicts a small pirate fleet arriving in ships equipped with bamboo sails. Landing, the pirates fold their sails and spring ashore, carrying lances. Two pirates climb a rocky outcrop where one, perched precariously on the shoulders of the other, scans the horizon for potential targets. Having sighted a distant settlement, they signal their confederates and prepare for the attack. Burning and looting, the wakō carry away a rich haul from a defenceless village before they are interrupted by Chinese forces that arrive to confront them in a pitched battle at the centre of the scroll. This depiction suggests a relatively equal fight, but the highly motivated wakō often fought with such ferocity that they were able to overcome even well-entrenched garrisons.

Although described collectively as Japanese pirates, the wakō were essentially multi-ethnic, though their leaders were generally Chinese. The Mingshi explains that, “because famous traitors such as Wang Zhi, Xu Hai, Chen Dong and Ma Ye... were not able to succeed in the mainland, they escaped to the islands [of Japan] to become ringleaders. The Japanese listened to their commands, and they enticed them into attacking. The great pirates of the seas used Japanese dress and insignia, and attacked the mainland in separate expeditions. There was no one who did not gain huge riches, and for this reason the troubles from Japan increased.”

Powerful pirate lords

Wang Zhi, frequently identified as a key ringleader, was born in Anhui province in China, around the early 16th century. For a time he was a smuggler tapping into the rich Japanese market. According to the *Chouhai tubian*, a detailed account of wakō piracy, Wang Zhi began to organise voyages to Japan in 1540, and quickly established a presence in the port of Hirado, where “the barbarians trusted and followed him, calling him Captain Wu Feng”. By the 1550s, piracy clearly presented greater opportunities than smuggling, and Wang Zhi recruited fighters for large-scale raids on Chinese targets.

He proved remarkably successful in his new role, swiftly moving through the stages of the piracy cycle, amassing large fleets and forging powerful connections with local



Ship shake British sailor John Turner is captured by pirate lord Zheng Yi near Macao in 1806. Over time, the most powerful east Asian pirates came to threaten trade routes

lords. He was also instrumental in the introduction of European firearms into Japan. When Portuguese traders arrived there in the 1540s carrying matchlock firearms, they were accompanied by a “Confucian scholar from the Great Ming called Gohō [Wu Feng]”. This was in fact Wang Zhi, in one of his many guises. Over the following decades, firearms revolutionised Japanese warfare, heralding a new era in which long rows of foot soldiers fired devastating musket volleys.

For all his riches and power, Wang Zhi stumbled in the final stage of the piracy cycle as he attempted to secure recognition from the Chinese state. After organising a series of

devastating attacks, he was eventually lured back to China in 1557 with promises of amnesty. Once there, though, he was arrested and subsequently executed.

In the early 17th century, Zheng Zhilong – another remarkably cosmopolitan figure – picked up where Wang Zhi had left off. Born in Fujian, he worked in the Portuguese trading post of Macao before moving to Hirado, the same port in western Japan where Wang Zhi had been based. There he befriended Dutch East India Company merchants and married a local Japanese woman. By the 1620s, Zheng Zhilong had moved his operations to the seas around Fujian, where he emerged as one of many pirate captains who prospered in the busy shipping lanes off China’s traditional maritime hub. He became so powerful that the Ming government decided to co-opt him, offering a position as admiral – and giving Zheng Zhilong, once the most formidable pirate in the region, the task of suppressing piracy.

Armed with this official endorsement, he soon dispensed with his rivals and emerged as the head of the powerful Zheng maritime network, which successfully fused maritime violence with long-distance trade. It was later taken over by his famous son Koxinga, who used it to challenge the Dutch East India Company. The contest between these two formidable maritime organisations reached a climax in 1662 when Koxinga successfully invaded Taiwan, ejecting the Dutch from their profitable colony.

Chinese pirates forged a new confederation of thousands of maritime marauders. One, Zheng Yi, controlled 70,000 fighters and 400 vessels



Blackbeard and beyond

Historian Rebecca Simon answered your questions about pirates on our podcast: historyextra.com/piracy-everything



Pirate queen

Zheng Yi Sao, shown in an 1836 illustration, imposed order on her husband's sprawling pirate coalition



Wang Zhi and Zheng Zhilong had remarkable careers, building maritime empires from scratch. They are also relatively well known, the subjects of many books and articles. But their careers are arguably eclipsed by a female pirate who has, until recently, been largely ignored by historians. This was Zheng Yi Sao, who rose from the humblest of origins to command a vast pirate fleet.

Pirate queen

Successive wakō pirates were helped immeasurably by the fact that they could retreat to a sheltered base in Japan. In the 19th century, Chinese pirates found a safe haven in the rebel Tây Sơn state in Vietnam. When Tây Sơn power started to fade, Chinese pirates forged a new confederation, drawing together thousands of maritime marauders. A key leader in this process was one Zheng Yi, who controlled a formidable force of some 70,000 fighters and 400 vessels. When he died in 1807, his wife – known to us simply as ‘the wife of Zheng Yi’, or Zheng Yi Sao – took over.

Zheng Yi Sao was born around 1774 and, like many other young girls in China in that period, was probably sold into

prostitution by her family; certainly, she worked in the sex trade in Guangzhou (Canton). In 1801, she married pirate leader Zheng Yi. After he died, she took their adopted son, Zhang Bao, as first her lover and later her husband, and assumed full control of the family business.

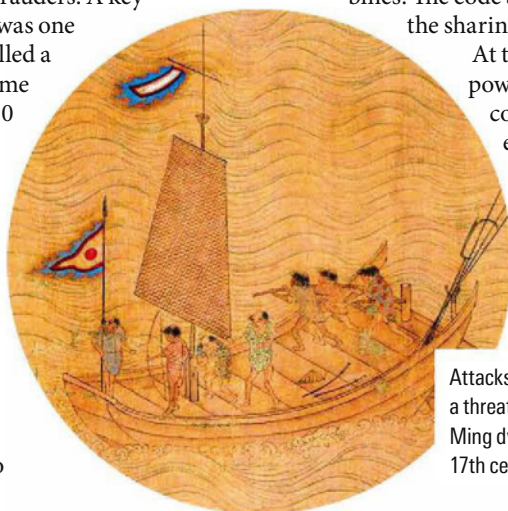
Like other successful pirate leaders, Zheng Yi Sao developed robust internal structures to bring order to a sprawling coalition of maritime marauders. Under the command of Zheng Yi Sao and Zhang Bao, an expansive code of laws was issued, with transgressors subject to harsh penalties. Anyone not obeying orders or attempting to seize command were put to death. Sexual assault of female prisoners was punished, though pirates could take individual women as wives or concubines. The code also strictly regulated the sharing of plunder.

At the height of her power, Zheng Yi Sao controlled a pirate operation that extended influence over both land and sea. Like

many successful pirates, she made money less from the violent capture of rich vessels than from selling protection, ensuring safe passage for merchants – if they paid up. Her fleets not only challenged the Chinese state but also became a significant threat to international traders. In a short space of time, pirates attached to Zheng Yi Sao forced five American schooners to retreat to a nearby port, seized a vessel belonging to a Portuguese colonial governor, and prevented a Siamese (Thai) tribute mission from reaching its destination.

Faced with a mounting crisis, Qing officials recognised that they could not defeat Zheng Yi Sao's pirate organisation by force; instead, they had to negotiate. Zheng Yi Sao travelled to Guangzhou to meet the governor-general there. When she surrendered alongside Zhang Bao in April 1810, her fleet boasted 226 ships, 1,315 cannon and 17,318 pirates. Zhang Bao would go on to lead Qing navy ships into action against other pirates.

Remember Blackbeard? That scourge of the Caribbean coast was killed in action while probably still in his thirties. Other pirates were hanged for their crimes. Yet, rather than being hunted to her death, Zheng Yi Sao was able to negotiate her own surrender, and died a wealthy woman at the age of 69 – a true measure of pirate success. **H**



Attacks by wakō pirates were a threat to the security of the Ming dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries

Adam Clulow is a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. His research examines piracy and privateering across maritime east Asia

Eleanor Glanville

The butterfly collector

Today, insects are seen as a vital part of our ecosystem, but in the late 17th century, they were often overlooked by science. **PATRICIA FARA** tells the story of a groundbreaking lepidopterist whose research provided solace from a turbulent personal life

Eleanor Glanville was in her early thirties when she made a terrible mistake. A wealthy widow, in 1685 she married a second husband who was more interested in her fortune than in marital bliss. He became increasingly violent, kidnapped their own son and turned her family against her. After she died, a judge rejected her will on the grounds that she was “not in sound mind”. The evidence offered for her supposed insanity was that she collected butterflies: apparently it was obvious that “none but those who were deprived of their senses, would go in Pursuit of Butterflies”.

Over three centuries later, Glanville remains the only British naturalist to have bequeathed their name to a native butterfly species, the Glanville fritillary. The science of entomology had not yet been established, but she was an early pioneer who helped to make the study of insects a rigorous academic discipline – one that is now recognised as being crucial for environmental protection. Long before the label ‘Anthropocene’ was coined to summarise the deleterious impact of human behaviour, Glanville was carefully documenting the prevalence of butterfly populations and aiming to ensure their longevity.

Glanville captured her first specimens of fritillaries in Lincolnshire. The wings of these pretty butterflies carry striking brown and yellow chequerboard patterns that reminded people of a dice box, or *fritillus* in Latin. They used to abound all over Europe, but in England they are

now mainly confined to the Isle of Wight, having succumbed to the double ecological pressure of hotter weather and a decline in their favourite food, ribwort plantain. Modern ecologists have devised an injunction for creatures who want to survive: “Move, Adapt or Die”. Glanville’s fritillaries are failing to follow that advice – and ironically, the acronym MAD matches the verdict that was pronounced upon Glanville herself.

Frustratingly, many women from the past have left only scant traces of their existence, but tangential evidence can often be

retrieved through records of their menfolk, their money and their marriages. For Glanville, this approach reveals that her father was a major who fought in Scotland for Oliver Cromwell, but that her wealth descended from the maternal side of the family.

Her second marriage was a prolonged disaster, while her earlier one proved too brief to be judged a success. Her first husband, the portrait painter Edmund Ashfield, presumably appreciated moving into Tickenham Court, a large property in Somerset that she had inherited, but he died after only a very few years, leaving her with two small children. After a suitable interval, she married Richard Glanville, a clergyman’s son from Suffolk who was around 10 years her junior, and they had four children together, two of whom survived infancy.

A spirit unbroken

At a time when divorce was virtually impossible, many wives were ill-treated by physically abusive husbands, yet Richard Glanville’s behaviour was exceptionally atrocious. After they separated because of “great discontent arising between them” (a polite euphemism that glossed over threats with a loaded pistol), he found another woman and dedicated himself to securing a substantial financial settlement. He abducted their son Richard, secretly farming him out to various unwilling relatives before forcing him to sign incriminating documents and then abandoning him.

Eleanor Glanville refused to cave in: instead, she appointed trustees for her properties and willed most of her estate to a cousin. But after she died, her avaricious husband persuaded numerous witnesses to testify against her in court. Even her son by her first marriage accused her of believing that her four surviving children had been turned into fairies.

Unlike many rejected wives, Glanville did not have to worry about money. During that long, solitary period of her life, Glanville sought solace by turning her attention once more to her childhood fascination with the natural world, especially moths and butterflies.

Her mental stability may well have deteriorated under her husband’s prolonged persecution, but diagnoses of insanity often provided convenient excuses for silencing women who dared to deviate from social expectation, and Glanville’s passion for butterflies exacerbated accusations of derangement. Roaming the countryside with a

// Glanville’s passion for butterflies exacerbated accusations of derangement //



ILLUSTRATION BY CAT O'NEIL

collecting net was deemed bizarre behaviour for anyone, let alone a woman, and she was castigated for venturing out dressed “like a gypsy” while she scoured the hedgerows to retrieve insect larvae. Conventionally, butterflies were regarded not as fascinating subjects for close observation but as symbols of shallowness and frivolity – although a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis also provided a metaphor for a soul that has escaped its bodily residence on Earth and flown up to heaven.

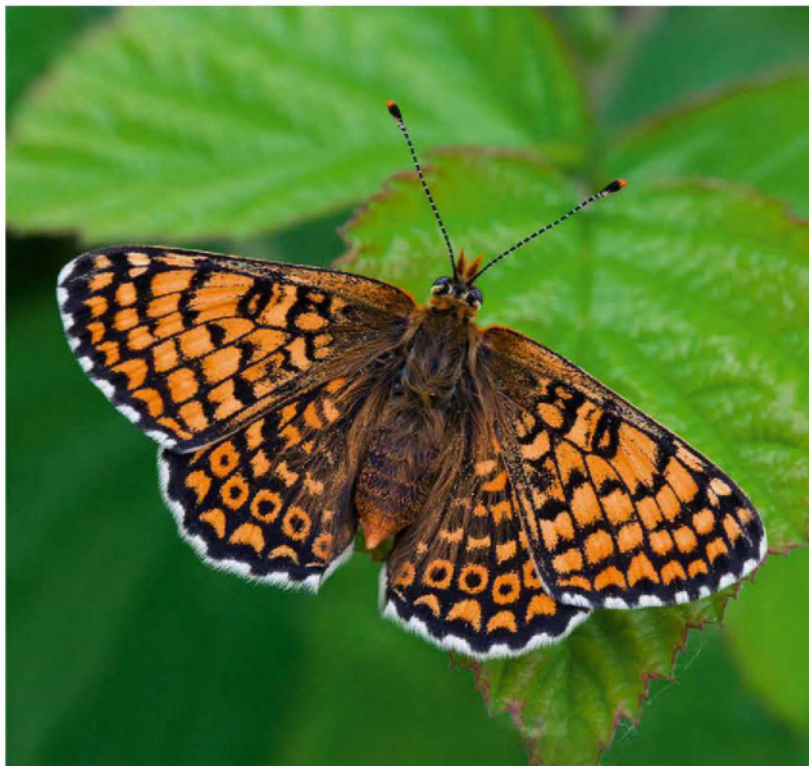
In contrast, Glanville approached her studies with scientific seriousness. Endowed with a substantial legacy, she could afford to continue living at Tickenham Court, as well as to indulge her passion for moths and butterflies. Like present-day ecologists, she realised that it was crucial to actively rear moths and butterflies, in order to protect them as well as to study the stages of their development. With the help of local girls, she travelled round the countryside beating bushes, equipped with a sheet to catch



The view over Tickenham moor today: except for the electricity pylons it still looks much as it would have done in Glanville's time



Tickenham Court was built in c1400, and expanded over the next 100 years. By 1650 it was the home of William Goodricke, an officer in Cromwell's army and father to Glanville



Glanville remains the only British naturalist to have bequeathed their name to a native butterfly species: the Glanville fritillary

falling larvae. After bringing her specimens home, she meticulously logged their growth, providing some of the earliest detailed accounts of insect lifecycles.

Making her mark

Glanville also recruited her servants as assistants, paying them with unusual generosity to deliver butterflies that particularly intrigued her. Issuing detailed instructions, she only accepted insect specimens that had been carefully protected by being wrapped in folded paper so that they arrived in tip-top condition. Since she was willing to pay up to a shilling (the equivalent of about five or six pounds today) for a fine specimen, she managed to accumulate a substantial collection.

As well as conducting her own extensive research, Glanville regularly exchanged letters and butterflies with other collectors all over the country. Although virtually the only woman in this correspondence network, she soon established a high reputation as a reliable and prolific naturalist. After she met fellow enthusiast William Vernon in London, he reported that she had compiled "the noblest collection of butterflies, all English, which has sham'd us", and she sent 100 examples to the Royal Society.

England's most eminent butterfly expert was James Petiver, and Glanville came to know him so well that he took on her son Richard as an apprentice. Sadly, this arrangement ended after three months when her husband enticed him away with a bribe of three guineas; only later did Richard realise that his father "was then acting the part of butcher who first tickles his ox then slaughters him". Petiver was compiling an authoritative Latin catalogue of British insects, and he gave full credit to Glanville for her contributions. She sent him boxes of carefully pinned butterflies from all over the country, including several that had been previously unknown, and notably the one that was later dubbed the Glanville fritillary.

Eleanor Glanville must forever remain an elusive character. No portraits survive, and no documents exist that convey her experiences and emotions in her own voice. Most of her precious specimens have been eaten away by mites and moulds, but three – two moths and a butterfly – are still preserved in London's Natural History Museum. Despite the turbulence of her life, she has not been silenced: her name lives on in the butterflies she loved, documented and preserved. **H**

Patricia Fara is a historian of science at the University of Cambridge. Her most recent book is *Life After Gravity: Isaac Newton's London Career* (OUP, 2021)



You can listen to an episode of BBC Radio 4's **Natural Histories** focusing on butterflies at bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b05w99rp



// Glanville regularly exchanged letters and butterflies with other collectors all over the country //

ANCIENT WORLD

“The empire came to an end because its kings made the wrong decisions”

Dylan Johnson reads Eckart Frahm's comprehensive history of ancient Assyria > page 73



BOOKS



ROMAN WOMEN

// Southon makes the important point that women have often been erased from Roman history //

Bronwen Riley on a lively work that aims to set the record straight on the roles of women in ancient Rome > page 74

ECONOMICS

“Dauntton advocates a capitalism that is fairer to poor countries and to the poor within countries”

Jane Humphries gets to grips with 90 years of world economic history > page 72

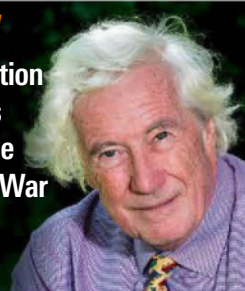
1980S BRITAIN

“The Miners’ Strike wove people together in new networks and changed lives forever”

Lucy Robinson enjoys Robert Gildea's extensively researched new book > page 70

INTERVIEW

Jonathan Sumption on Joan of Arc's pivotal role in the Hundred Years' War > page 66



INTERVIEW / JONATHAN SUMPTION

"It was Joan of Arc who persuaded the French that they could win"

JONATHAN SUMPTION speaks to Rob Attar about the final volume in his epic history of the Hundred Years' War, which reveals how the French turned the tide against the English monarchy

Rob Attar: Your book is titled *Triumph and Illusion*. Whose was the triumph, and what was the illusion?

Jonathan Sumption: It's deliberately ambiguous. The English were on top at the beginning of the period [1422], but they quickly declined and lost everything they'd gained over the previous decade. They then deceived themselves into thinking that there was some way in which they could conserve at least part of what they'd conquered.

There were triumphs and illusions on the other side, too. Eventually, the French did triumph: they excluded England from every part of France except Calais. But they had their own illusions. They felt that the English had no support in France except from traitors, but the striking thing is that the English had a lot of support in the areas that they occupied until they started losing, particularly in Normandy.

This was a very early example of a military occupation, and the English absolutely grasped the fact that they had to win the hearts and minds of the subjects in order to survive. They did that, initially, simply by providing an effective government and a working system of law. This had been completely missing in previous decades because France was in the middle of a civil war, and neither party to that war could supply that effective government.

As you alluded to there, when we're talking about the Hundred Years' War, France was not united, was it?

That's absolutely right. The English only ever got a secure foothold in France when it was divided by civil war. The 15th century witnessed the most serious civil war that France had ever experienced – between supporters of the Duke of Burgundy and supporters of the monarchy [led by Charles VII, still known as the Dauphin] – and the English got

into France under the cover of that war. The Hundred Years' War continued until, in the 1450s, the French were able to suppress domestic rebellions. They firstly detached the Burgundians from the English cause in the 1430s, then they progressively reduced the aristocracy to powerlessness. By the beginning of the 16th century, the English could no longer get a foothold because they could never find any domestic support.

This volume begins in the aftermath of Henry V's death. How decisive a moment was this?

It was crucial because Henry V had been a remarkable ruler. Not only had he been an extremely efficient soldier and administrator, but his rather austere sense of justice and rectitude had been very attractive in a

country that had experienced a decade of civil war and anarchy. So his death was a misfortune; what turned it into a disaster was the fact his heir was a baby [Henry VI], incapable of ruling.

The English were able to recover some ground because [Henry V's brother] John, Duke of Bedford was ruling as regent in the English-occupied parts of France. He was one of the most remarkable figures of the late Middle Ages: a very rare example of a good uncle. Medieval history is full of bad uncles, but the duke was an outstanding patriot who devoted his entire life to the service of his infant nephew. Unfortunately, the duke died in 1435. Things were already going badly at that point because of the extraordinary eruption onto the scene of Joan of Arc, but it got even worse after Bedford died.

As you say, in the 1420s the English were actually doing fairly well in military terms. Do you think we sometimes neglect this period in favour of more famous episodes like Agincourt?

We undoubtedly do. In the first two years after Henry V's death, the Duke of Bedford and his generals succeeded in winning two major battles. One at Cravant, in northern Burgundy, and one at Verneuil, in southern Normandy.

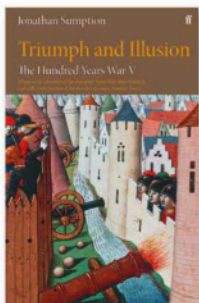
The main significance of Cravant was that it destroyed the Scottish army operating in France which had, for four years, made life very difficult for the English. But the decisive moment was the battle of Verneuil in 1424, when the English defeated the largest army that the Dauphin had succeeded in assembling so far, including a whole new army recently arrived from Scotland.

It destroyed the morale of the French, it boosted the reputation of the English in the territories that they occupied, and for the next five years, until Joan of Arc's appearance, the English had it almost entirely their own way.

Joan of Arc is, of course, a pivotal figure in this story. A lot has been written about her over the years, but what's your take?

The fashion in recent years has been to belittle the contribution that Joan made to the war, but I think it was fundamental. She came onto the scene at a time when morale in the French government and its army was at rock bottom. They were, as they saw it, on the verge of losing the city of Orléans, which would have been a major disaster. There was even talk within the French government of abandoning large parts of western France to the English. What Joan did was to persuade the French that they could win.

Napoleon once said war is three-quarters morale, and that is very much borne out by the story of Joan of Arc. She did not command armies, she rarely determined strategy and she did not even wield a sword in anger. So what did she do? She persuaded French soldiers that God was bound to give them victory because they were the virtuous side. In addition, because she believed so totally in her



Triumph and Illusion: The Hundred Years War, Volume V

by Jonathan Sumption
(Faber, 992 pages, £40)



PROFILE

Jonathan Sumption is a historian, author and former senior judge who sat on the UK Supreme Court from 2012–18. As a historian, he is best known for his five-volume history of the Hundred Years' War, the first volume of which was published in 1990.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAMIAN MCFADDEN

visions and her guiding saints, she was completely impervious to danger and perfectly happy to place herself in a position where there was a high risk of being killed. Yet she survived.

People who saw this realised that they were in the presence of somebody remarkable. The Count of Dunois, the chief French commander, later said that before Joan came along, 200 Englishmen could defeat 1,000 Frenchmen. Whereas afterwards, the story was reversed: relatively small forces of French could defeat whole English armies. And that wasn't just a French point of view: the Duke of Bedford said that everything had been going fine until this "witch" came along who had deprived the English of their courage and boosted the self-confidence of the French. So you have a complete consensus that Joan was a critical figure.

One thing is clear: the march on Reims, to crown the dauphin as Charles VII [in 1429], was her strategy. All the experienced soldiers in the Dauphin's court advised against it, but by that time she had achieved such a hold on the Dauphin's mind that she made him do it. The coronation was a seminal event because it conferred a measure of legitimacy on the Dauphin, which he hadn't had before. Although he had been proclaimed king in 1422, he was normally referred to as the Dauphin – not just by the English but by many French leaders and even Joan herself. After the coronation, he was referred to as the king and a great majority of people, including many of the English and the French in English service, now regarded him as king and the English as interlopers. That was a very big psychological change – and psychology matters in war.

Your book also covers Joan's trial and execution. As a former judge, what's your view on the legal proceedings against her?

It's difficult for modern people to get into the mentality of her judges, because she was charged with offences – heresy, blasphemy, witchcraft and so on – which nowadays we regard as absurd and fanciful. But you have to remember that, at the time, both sides viewed her as a miracle worker.

The French regarded her as having achieved miracles because she was the instrument of God for the salvation of France. The English tried to blunt the moral effect of the French victories by portraying them as the work of Satan.

Her judges, who were pro-Burgundian French, could not accept that her visions and achievements were inspired by God. It was always clear that once she was accused of blasphemy, of misusing the name of



Combined forces In 1424, the English faced French, Scottish and Milanese troops in the battle of Verneuil. Their victory was a huge blow to French morale and ushered in a five-year period of great success for the English in the war

// From the origins of our species until the 19th century, the two principal collective activities of mankind were religion and war //

God, she was going to be condemned, because the alternative would have been to accept that she had a God-given mission to expel the English from France.

The procedures themselves strike most of us as extremely unfair because they pitted a 19-year-old, uneducated girl against trained theologians, philosophers and academics, who were trying to fit her into established categories of heretical belief and behaviour. But although the trial was a very unequal battle, she acquitted herself with extraordinary skill.

Reading the transcripts is a remarkable experience because we have an almost verbatim record of the many days of cross-examination that she endured at the hands of hostile judges. And she was articulate; she understood what was going on. She would say things like: "That question is irrelevant to your inquiry." Or: "I already answered that five minutes ago," or sometimes she would simply say: "Next question please." This kind of conduct coming from an uneducated but very self-confident woman was extremely disconcerting to the judges.

When Joan was executed in 1431, the war still had more than 20 years to run, but had the tide decisively turned?

Yes it had. Before Joan came along, the English controlled more or less the whole territory north of the Loire. The result of the march on Reims was that the French were able to take control of the bridge towns over the Marne, east of Paris, and to seize the territory north of Normandy. So, for the first time in many years, the French were in control of the territory north and south of Normandy and north and south of the Paris area. The English had to fight in Normandy on two fronts; sooner or later, that was a situation in which they were bound to lose.

The English were on the defensive, and they didn't have the resources to clear the French from the territories that they had conquered in the time of Joan of Arc. The inevitable result was that their territory would be nibbled away until they were left with nothing.

The traditional end of the Hundred Years' War is 1453. What happened then?

That was the year in which the French, having already conquered Normandy three years earlier, finally completed the conquest of Gascony. The English kings had controlled this territory in south-western France since the 12th century. It was their oldest possession in France and, in fact, the English had held it for longer than any of their subsequent colonies, other than the island of Jamaica. The conquest of Gascony meant that, with the exception of Calais, England no longer had a foothold in France.

In England, the Wars of the Roses followed hot on the heels of the Hundred Years' War. Did one beget the other?

The common cause in both cases was the incapacity of Henry VI. But there was also rage and disappointment and a desire for scapegoats for the loss of Normandy and Gascony. The English looked back at the victories of Henry V, and could not believe that such a dramatic



Maid of Orléans

Joan of Arc was an inspiring figure for the French troops, and may well have turned the tide of the war in their favour, says Sumption

reversal of their fortunes could have happened without treachery on the part of Henry VI's ministers.

Conversely, had there been popular support for the French campaigns in England when things had been going well?

English sentiment was ambivalent. There was popular support for the war, provided that they did not have to pay for it through their taxes. For years they took the view that English taxpayers ought not have to pay for wars that their king was fighting in his capacity as king of France. After 1428, they became more realistic, but would never fund the war on the scale required.

The people most affected by the war were those living in the battleground regions of France. What was life like for them?

It was terrible. The physical destruction is difficult to imagine. The problem was not just the size of the armies, which by modern standards were quite small. But each army was followed by numerous camp followers and people who were non-combatants but pretty violent all the same. In addition, in areas where the army passed through, law and order broke down completely. The land was taken over by roaming bands of brigands.

The symptoms could be seen in the landscape. There were large tracts of northern France where you couldn't see any sign of human habitation – just domestic animals left roaming free in areas that had been totally depopulated. You could also see it in the towns and villages. During the 13th century the towns had expanded beyond their walls and developed large suburbs. Many of these had to be demolished so as not to give cover to an attacking army. This left people crammed inside the walls of towns, in accommodation that was only sufficient for about a third of them, and very large numbers fled these areas for other parts of France.

There were the knock-on effects, too. Often, food could not be moved by river or road, so even in times of plenty some regions starved. When there was a bad harvest, it was much worse.

Undernourished people were vulnerable to disease and there were

major epidemics in the towns and countryside. We know from reports of travellers after the English left that France was a picture of desolation. English judge Sir John Fortescue, who was forced into exile during the Wars of the Roses, said that it was depressing travelling through northern France, because here was one of the richest countries in the world and yet peasants were starving in their villages.

This is the final volume in a series you've been working on for over 30 years. Taken as a whole, why do you think the Hundred Years' War is such an important event?

It is important because it separated England and France after four centuries in which their fortunes had been closely intertwined, and set them on divergent paths – France an aggressive absolute monarchy, England a chastened parliamentary state.

Taking a broader view, from the origins of our species until the 19th century, the two principal collective activities of mankind were religion and war. Religion and war have created the state as we know it. In the late Middle Ages the English and French were beginning to have governments that can be recognised as essentially the same in their objectives, and often their

methods, as the modern state. It was the pressure of war – increasing war, rather than religion – that created the state and built it into the great tax-collecting, money-spending and aggressive institution that it remained until recently. That's why the Hundred Years' War is so interesting.

William Pitt once observed that the principal weapon of war is money, and many people have pointed out that war is won at least as much by administrators as it is by soldiers. The Hundred Years' War exemplifies this. It was a complete war, in the sense that we're not just looking at armies, but the efforts of entire populations.

Your books are often held up as paragons of narrative history. Is this form of history writing as important today as when you began the series?

There was a period when narrative history was despised by serious academics. That period has ended, and there are now major works of narrative history by professional academic historians. But I'm not suggesting that analytical and thematic history has become less important. I think what people have realised is that to understand a society, the first building block has to be a deep understanding of what actually happened. What I have tried to do is to mix a narrative of what happened with an explanation of why it happened, based on a study of how people lived, how they thought, how they governed and how they conducted themselves in one of the great crises of the two major countries of western Europe. So it's not *just* narrative history – at least that has been my objective.

And will it be the Thirty Years' War next for you?

I'm not confident enough in my longevity! 



Take the story further

Listen to an extended version of this interview with Jonathan Sumption on our podcast soon: historyextra.com/podcast





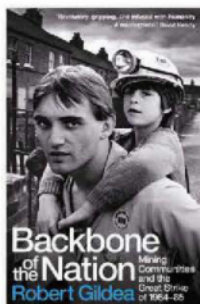
Festive cheer

Women prepare Christmas dinners for striking families in Yorkshire, 1984. According to Lucy Robinson, "Christmas marked some of the most memorable moments of kindness and solidarity in striking communities"

1980S BRITAIN

Voices from the picket line

LUCY ROBINSON enjoys a new history of the 1984–85 Miners' Strike that puts first-hand accounts from those involved front and centre



Backbone of the Nation: Mining Communities and the Great Strike of 1984–85

by Robert Gildea
Yale University Press,
496 pages, £25

The year-long 1984 miners' strike divided families, communities and the nation. In his new history of the 'Great Strike', Robert Gildea shows how it also

wove people together in new networks and changed lives forever.

Mines and miners have long been markers of political, and national strength. As the 20th century moved to its close they became markers of deindustrialisation, changing post-Cold War power relations and the end of traditional community and class identities. But Gildea shows us how mines are more than a metaphor for the state of the nation. Pits were not just employers: they were communities. They provided community spaces, savings schemes, sports clubs, dance halls and education, such as the NUM training courses that

encouraged miners to read Marx and Engels.

Similarly *Backbone of the Nation* is much more than an account of the strike's causes and milestones – although for anyone not familiar with the details of the strike, Gildea provides an excellent overview. More importantly he weaves together many different stories to show why the Miners' Strike mattered, and why stories about the Miners' Strike matter. This is a book about the power of sharing stories, and how an interview is a gift to future readers or listeners.

Stories mattered *during* the strike, too. Striking miners drew on tales of the past:

// Striking communities were often categorised by their mass, portrayed in the media as mobs blindly following their leader //

of the riots at Tonypany in 1910 or Saltley Gate coking plant in 1972. In the face of media silence, tabloid propaganda and police reports of violence on picket lines, the first-hand accounts of strikers, their families and their allies mattered greatly. Gildea captures these stories from earlier oral history collections, diaries, memoirs or transcripts of documentaries, and then combines them with 148 of his own more recent interviews.

Gildea quotes Mick Lynch of the RMT: “The working class is back,” and in the book he brings back the voices of the working class from the past, complemented by later interviews which provide longer-term reflection. This combination is the perfect way to capture the strike’s impact on individual lives and our wider sense of collective struggle or class solidarity.

A nuanced picture

Striking communities were often categorised by their mass, portrayed in the media as mobs blindly following their leader, Arthur Scargill. By gathering different people’s interpretations and experiences, Gildea turns that mob into a collection of individuals, families and communities. Gildea weaves their stories into 16 chapters divided into four sections, with a key event as a case study at the heart of each.

He begins with an invaluable overview of the milestones and chronology of the strike, covering the complicated accounts of the outbreak of the strike, the growth of flying pickets as a tactic and the traumatic experiences at the battle of Orgreave. The next section maps out the variety of support groups behind the strikers and their communities, as well as focusing on the important work by women within and beyond those communities, and the Dulais Valley’s connection with Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

The third section returns to the strike’s chronology, focusing on Christmas 1984 as a turning point in ways that allow the heartwarming and tragic to sit uneasily, but importantly, together. Christmas marked

some of the most memorable moments of kindness and solidarity. There are touching accounts of donors providing Christmas presents, children’s parties and food for Christmas dinner. Turkeys were donated from Norfolk or imported from Europe, and the SOGAT union sent chickens. A Swedish journalist encouraged his readers to send gifts. But this is also the chapter that leads readers into the miners’ final defeat, and the unresolved tensions between a return to work with dignity and justice for those who had been sacked for their union activities.

In the final section, Gildea brings us up to date with what happened to those voices that we have grown to know and care about over the course of the book. They share the price paid by some blacklisted and sacked miners, who struggled with marital breakdown, ill health, unemployment and addiction, as well as the growth, newfound confidence and opportunities for other ex-strikers – particularly in access to education.

Gildea adds nuance to more established stories around women’s strike involvement, for example, but he also adds new insights. He recounts how children contributed to the strike, by picketing lorries outside their school or joining picket lines. They also became the focus of many of the gestures of solidarity – being invited on holiday to Holland or Dublin, for example. But they have also had to live with the strike’s aftermath. His sections on children as the “casualties, survivors, heirs and redeemers of the strike” are touching and thought-provoking, and explain why the strike still matters.

Too often the history of the miners’ strike has been focused on the politics of Westminster or on South Yorkshire as the ‘vanguard’, often embodied in Margaret Thatcher and Arthur Scargill. Gildea uses the breadth of the voices in this book to draw a wider map of the strike. By bringing together accounts from across the UK, he has captured the local and regional differences within the national strike. He also maps the networks connecting out from the strike to activist groups at home and the international solidarity movement, resulting in a picture that is simultaneously specific and local, and broad and international.

The Miners’ Strike was never just about money: it was about sympathy and solidarity on a grand scale. Examining the individual stories, connections and loyalties at a local as well as international level is the perfect way to capture its impact and legacy. **IT**

Lucy Robinson is a professor in collaborative history at the University of Sussex. Her latest book is *Now That’s What I Call a History of the 1980s* (Manchester University Press, 2023)

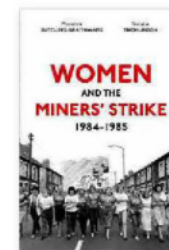
FURTHER READING

Lucy Robinson recommends three more books on the Miners’ Strike



Over the Rainbow
by Nicola Field
(Dog Horn, 2016)

Field was an original member of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. This book was first published in 1995 as a response to ongoing debates about gay rights in the UK; in this later edition, Field captures the end of the earlier connection between radicalism and LGBTQ+ politics.



Women and the Miners’ Strike
by Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Natalie Thomlinson
(OUP, forthcoming October 2023)

Similarly national in coverage, this is a great companion to Gildea’s work, drawing together the local and shared experiences of women’s involvement in the strike. It also includes the stories of women who supported miners who continued to work.



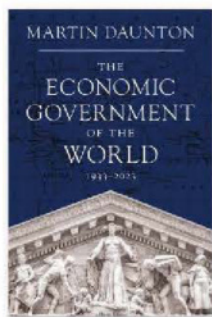
The Enemy Within
by Seumas Milne
(Verso Books, 2014)

Milne published his account of government, security forces and press involvement in the strike in 1994. He revisited it 20 years on, following the release of previously secret cabinet papers and ex-MI5 boss Stella Rimington’s memoirs.

ECONOMICS

Follow the money

JANE HUMPHRIES reviews a wide-ranging but very readable study of the changing tides of global economics from the Great Depression to the present day



The Economic Government of the World, 1933-2023
by Martin Dauntton
Allen Lane, 1024 pages, £45

This new book is a history of the institutions and individuals who sought to manage the global economy over

the last century. It is a huge topic, and a big book – but readers need not be discouraged as Dauntton makes the story accessible and absorbing, explaining how successive orders begin to fail, break down (often painfully) and then are hesitantly replaced, with the succeeding order modified and adapted to changing circumstances until it, too, begins to weaken.

The book opens with world leaders gathering at the 1933 World Economic Conference to plan a response to the Great Depression. The origins of the crisis and the difficulties of moving forward are summarised in John Maynard Keynes' analysis of then-extant capitalism as not intelligent, not beautiful, not just, not virtuous and not even able to "deliver the goods" – yet not readily replaceable. The failure of a collective response resulted in trade and currency wars, fed economic nationalism and, in part, led to the Second World War.

The war focused minds on how to redesign the world's financial systems to prevent a recurrence of depression, with its dangerous political ramifications. According to Dauntton, international regulation under the Bretton Woods system, the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade represented "embedded liberalism". The welfare of citizens and increasing globalisation were balanced by a postwar social contract distributing the benefits of growth between capital and labour, underpinned by a shift in economic policy. Keynesian economics promised a managed form of capitalism: one that could be directed to be fairer and more far-sighted as well as prevented from sliding into recessions.

Bretton Woods brought a golden age of economic growth and relative social harmony, but skewed the benefits in favour of developed



Break the bank Impoverished protesters clash with police in New York, 1934. Martin Dauntton's new study of global economics examines how various financial systems have risen – and fallen – over the past century

// Keynesian economics promised a managed form of capitalism: one that could be directed to be fairer and more far-sighted //

countries and bred resentment. Within nations, social contracts and welfare states came under pressure. The cycle of stress, failure and new focus resulted in neoliberalism and intensified globalisation, accompanied by a resurgent emphasis on the wisdom of markets and the retreat of Keynesian economics. The 2008 financial crisis exposed the flaws in neoliberalism but the policy response was piecemeal and short term. Banks were bailed out without addressing the threats of barely-regu-

lated markets and avaricious capitalism.

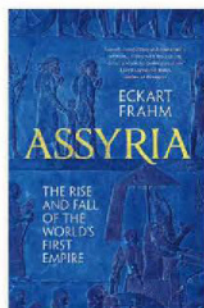
Dauntton leaves us facing new crises: potentially catastrophic epidemics and the existential threat of climate change. Both require a co-ordinated global response – yet, as in 1933, our leaders seem paralysed. Dauntton advocates a capitalism that is fairer both to poor countries and to the poor within countries. But change will need international political will – and he is not optimistic.

If I have a criticism of this erudite book, it is that the discipline of economics gets off lightly. Brief self-reflection followed the banking crisis, but the usual hubris soon returned, with economists failing to advise effectively against the risks of raising barriers between the UK and its major trading partner through Brexit; let alone pressing for a green transition. Perhaps access to Dauntton's fairer capitalism requires another revolution in economics. **II**

Jane Humphries is emeritus professor of economic history at the University of Oxford and centennial professor at the London School of Economics

Assyria's ascent

DYLAN JOHNSON is impressed by a comprehensive history of an ancient Mesopotamian empire



Assyria
by Eckart Frahm
Bloomsbury, 528 pages, £30

In *Assyria*, Eckart Frahm explores the rise, fall and afterlife of the Assyrian state between 2500 and 609 BC, considering whether it

can be counted as the world's first empire.

Precisely when a state crosses the threshold to empire depends on how the term is defined. For Frahm, an empire requires sustained cohesive power over faraway countries. Earlier near eastern kingdoms only ever became "aspirational empires"; what enabled the city of Ashur to cross this threshold is complex and uncertain. Nevertheless, Frahm offers clear answers on life in that empire, the causes of its precipitous fall, and its enduring legacy.

The first writing from Ashur (2100 BC), a provincial town on the Tigris river, describes political structures that appear democratic, mercantile and conflict-averse – a stark contrast to the bellicose empire it would engender. The city's path to empire was far from smooth: like other Mesopotamian kingdoms, it fell into a cycle of centralisation and dissolution. Yet Frahm sprinkles his book with clues that Ashur was special. Foreign rule

revealed the benefits of super-regional polities; the adoption of kingship in 1363 BC was accompanied by the royal obligation to "expand the land" (*mātka rappiṣ*); and mythological notions about chaos beyond the borders of Assyria spurred 'civilising' military campaigns to distant lands.

Frahm argues that the responses of kings Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V and Sargon II to various crises transformed the kingdom of Ashur into the Assyrian empire. In the face of population decline, military downturns and crop reduction, these rulers dedicated themselves to conquest and annexation.

Assyria's imperial heyday (745–609 BC) receives the most detailed attention. Frahm explores Sargon II's deportation policies and the historical basis behind the famous 'Lost Tribes of Israel'. He contrasts Assyrian, biblical and classical accounts of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC, looking for the historical truth behind the deliverance of the city. He dedicates an entire chapter to one year (671 BC) of King Esarhaddon's reign, as he conquered Egypt and pushed the borders of Assyria to the edges of the known world. As for Ashurbanipal, widely remembered as Assyria's great philosopher king, Frahm characterises him as a pseudointellectual sadist whose vanity and malice far outstripped his love of knowledge.

Assyria's fall in 609 BC was just as quick as its rise. It was brought about, Frahm argues, by a confluence of internal and external factors: climate change, nomadic incursions, internal rebellion and the emergence of powerful eastern neighbours. But above all, the Assyrian empire came to an end because its kings – the lynchpins for the whole machine – made the wrong decisions in the face of these pressures.

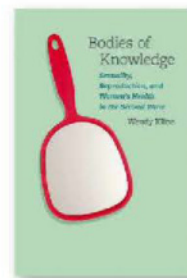
Commendably, Frahm tries to demonstrate why Assyria matters to world history. He contextualises the legacy of Assyria to (de)construct modern political identities, both for Iraq's Ba'ath Party and for the so-called Islamic State. This scholarly yet accessible book is a magisterial synthesis of Assyrian history by one of the world's leading experts. **H**



Power player

King Sargon II (pictured) ruled Assyria during its imperial heyday – but the empire quickly crumbled

Agnes Arnold-Forster on a groundbreaking study of postwar women's health



Bodies of Knowledge: Sexuality, Reproduction and Women's Health in the Second Wave
by Wendy Kline
(Chicago, 2010)

This is a lucid, compelling and revelatory account of women who, in the 1970s and '80s, sought access to information about their own bodies, to tackle medical misogyny, and to achieve gender equality. It not only redirected my intellectual trajectory towards the history of modern and contemporary gender, medicine and healthcare, but also transformed my understanding of feminism as it relates to health and sickness.

It prompted me to re-examine my own sometimes frustrating experiences with healthcare professionals, and to understand it in the context of women's longstanding efforts to be taken seriously by medicine. It is the book that has best captured, for me at least, the old adage that 'the personal is political' – or, in this case, historical.

First published in 2010, Kline's book engages with still-pressing issues. It argues that second-wave feminists made their physical bodies central to their personal identities, and prioritised embodied, experiential knowledge over supposedly objective, or disembodied, forms of expertise. In other words, women's accounts of their own bodies should be taken seriously. Written before today's so-called 'gender wars', this book nevertheless speaks to these fraught and politicised debates. It should be read by anyone interested in the relationship between bodies, biology and feminism, past or present. **II**

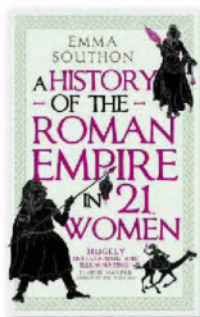
Agnes Arnold-Forster is a historian at the University of Edinburgh and the author of *Cold, Hard Steel* (MUP, 2023)

Dylan Johnson is a lecturer in ancient near eastern history at Cardiff University

ROME

A woman's world

BRONWEN RILEY appraises an irreverent study that examines the Roman empire through the lives of 21 of its female subjects, from fearsome queens to vestal virgins



A History of the Roman Empire in 21 Women
by Emma Southon
Oneworld, 416 pages, £18.99

Emma Southon's lively, alternative history begins with the story of Hersilia – one of the abducted Sabine women – who married

Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, in around 750 BC. It ends with the plight of the Christian empress Galla Placida, kidnapped by the Gothic king Alaric during the sack of Rome in AD 410. Both of these women – from the start and end of Roman history, respectively – were victims of male aggression, caught up in wars and politics not of their making. Although denied official roles as soldiers or politicians, they were both integral to the story of their times, able and willing to influence events in their own way.

For the Romans, Hersilia was a crucial part of their foundation myth – yet who these days has heard of her? Southon makes the important point that women have often been erased from Roman history: not by the Romans themselves, but by later writers favouring narratives that are overwhelmingly skewed towards the white, western male perspective and dismissing the female 'domestic' sphere as boring and inconsequential.

This bias extends to translations that sometimes give a misogynistic spin even when not present in the original. According to his biographer Suetonius, Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) claimed he divorced his wife Scribonia because he was sick of her "*morum perversitatem*", which means perverse or wayward character – yet modern translations have used loaded words such as 'shrewish' or 'nagging'. As Suetonius later tells us, Scribonia's main issue was that Augustus was unfaithful – or, as Southon puts it, "wouldn't stop knobbing other women".

Some readers may find Southon's highly colloquial style, contemporary cultural analogies and general all-round jokiness jarring, while others will be entertained by her deliberate irreverence. She is braced for criticism of her grammar – warning "pedants" not to



Lost from the story Hersilia (pictured holding back her husband, Romulus) was a key part of the Romans' foundational myth – but few have heard of her today

// As well as taking active roles in 'Important Things' like war and politics, women exerted power behind the scenes //

email her. However, she does make generalisations that can veer into inaccuracies, and there are factual errors: for instance, there are Christian sources written by women post-Perpetua. And it's odd to attribute Virginia Woolf's looking-glass quote solely to Barbara Kruger, even if the artist did add a "you" to it in her installation.

In her mix of 21 women, Southon includes several royals and aristocrats. British queens Boudicca and Cartimandua and the splendid Palmyrene Zenobia dramatically demonstrate

that women did sometimes take an active role in "Important Things" such as war and politics. And Southon reminds us of all the behind-the-scenes diplomacy employed by women related to powerful men in order to further their own and their family's interests, which rarely gets mentioned or properly credited.

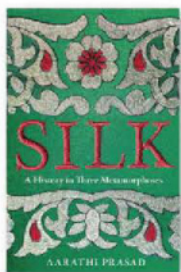
But it's not only powerful women who Southon focuses on. To get a more rounded picture, we are also introduced to women from other backgrounds: a businesswoman from Pompeii; officers' wives on the British frontier; a courtesan. Southon also explores the significant role women played in religious life, from the vestal virgins to the Christian saints and martyrs, as well as giving precious glimpses of female friendship and loving marriages.

As Southon admits, she could have chosen any number of women to serve her narrative. It is not that the material is lacking: Roman women have always been there – we must now ensure their stories sing out. **H**

Bronwen Riley is the author of *Journey to Britannia* (Head of Zeus, 2015)

SCIENCE

Spinning a tale



Silk: A History in Three Metamorphoses

By Aarathi Prasad

William Collins,
368 pages, £22

Around 5,000 years ago, a Neolithic sculptor meticulously carved a long, thin sliver of boar tusk into a silkworm caterpillar. By the time this ancient artefact was unearthed in China perhaps a decade ago, scientists were investigating the possibilities of creating smart silk that could stabilise drugs, revitalise paralysed vocal cords or deliver medications deep inside a patient's body. In *Silk: A History in Three Metamorphoses*, Aarathi Prasad celebrates the timeless allure of this lustrous material and investigates human attempts to cultivate the creatures that produce it.

Like the fabric itself, *Silk* invites luxurious enjoyment, wrapping its readers in lyrically narrated anecdotes, intriguing life stories and wondrous facts. Rather than giving a chronological account, this book is structured as three sections, each overflowing with information loosely connected to its central theme. While the first part focuses on moths, the second presents less expected natural producers such as spiders and shellfish. The third, 'Reinvention', is somewhat speculative, optimistically reviewing current research into futuristic applications as well



Moth manufacturer

An American silk moth. Many creatures produce silk, from shellfish to spiders

as missed opportunities in the past. Suppose knowledge about the protective virtues of silk pocket handkerchiefs had travelled across the Atlantic from the OK Corral shootout to reach a Polish priest who invented a bulletproof vest? If Archduke Ferdinand had been wearing one in 1914, the world would now be very different.

A trained geneticist, Prasad understands the hard science but also has the gift of writing evocative historical prose. Stunning colour photos include close-ups of insects as

well as a glorious silk dress worn by Queen Anne of Denmark, embroidered with designs of larvae and mulberry leaves.

Prasad's book elaborates in delightful detail this eulogy to silk expressed by the philosopher Master Xun in the third century BC: "How naked its external form, yet it continually transforms like a spirit. Its achievement covers the world." **H**

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Patricia Fara, historian of science at the University of Cambridge

POLITICS

Fear and loathing



Fear: An Alternative History of the World

by Robert Peckham

Profile Books, 448 pages, £25

The spectre of fear has haunted human society throughout history. It is a tool of power, a harbinger of destruction and death – and no one is immune. In 2016, presidential candidate Donald Trump infamously contended that "real power is... fear".

Whether fears are deeply individual (for example, agoraphobia) or shared (among people living in a totalitarian state, for

instance), they are always political. The objects of, responses to, impacts of and scientific understanding of phobias all change as a result of wider events and political, medical and media commentators.

In *Fear: An Alternative History of the World*, historian Robert Peckham seeks to provide a history of fear's impact. It is an ambitious book, global in focus and spanning the period from antiquity to the present. His central argument is that fear can be a way of challenging power as well as of asserting it. Progressive forces can harness fear for their own ends. Peckham convincingly shows how we can learn from the past.

In his preface and prologue (it seems strange to have both!), Peckham asks: what is fear? But he never fully answers this question. In this book, 'fear' is a very vague

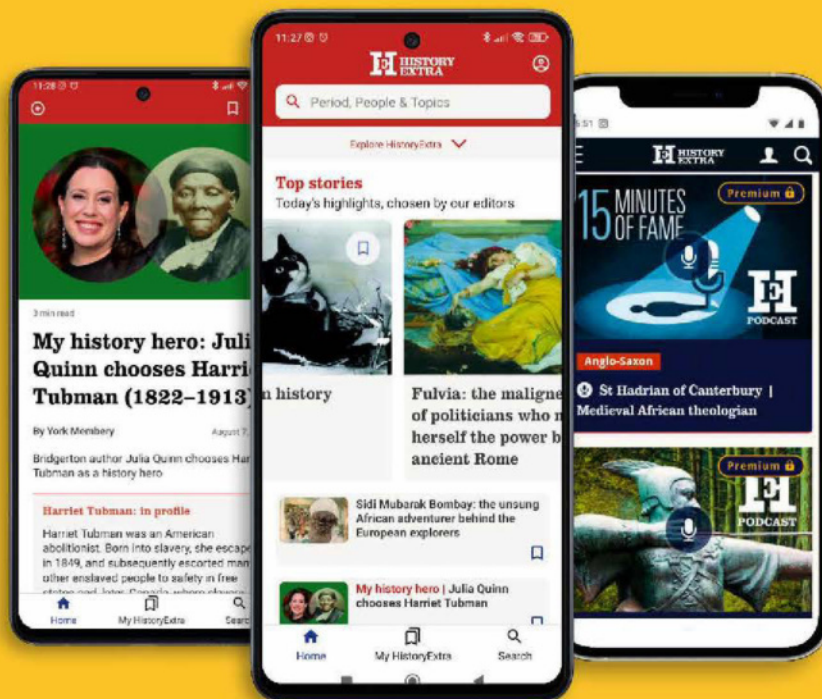
concept. It is that 'something' that arises in the face of disasters, revolutions, wars, violence, pandemics and political upheavals. The fuzziness of Peckham's conceptualisation of fear is a weakness. Readers hoping to gain deeper insights into the history of fear will be disappointed: the idea of 'fear' floats through the text, unmoored.

However, readers keen to grasp a better understanding of the history of the world will be entranced by Peckham's ability to communicate complex political, religious, economic, artistic, medical, military, technological and cultural trends in a clear and engaging style. **H**

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Joanna Bourke, former professor of history at Birkbeck, University of London and author of *Fear: A Cultural History* (Virago, 2005)



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EXHIBITION

Colour vision

As a result of scientific advances made during the industrial revolution, Victorians had access to a dazzling range of affordable pigments – and colour exploded into their lives, from their clothing to their homeware.

A major new exhibition at the Ashmolean – Britain's oldest public museum – examines the use of colour in Victorian art, fashion and design, from costume and paintings to jewellery, statuary, pottery and more. Displays feature art by JMW Turner, John Ruskin and James McNeill Whistler, plus Queen Victoria's hallmark (but decidedly less colourful) black mourning dress.

Colour Revolution

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford /
21 September–18 February / ashmolean.org

An ornate 19th-century bookcase, decorated in vivid hues. A new exhibition at the Ashmolean explores the explosion of bright pigments in the Victorian era



TV

Reading the past

Combining literature with travel can help us unlock history in unexpected ways. That's one of the key ideas behind a new show in which comedian and book lover Mel Giedroyc heads for Dorset, where she meets up with actor and local resident Martin Clunes.

Together, the duo present a book-filled travelogue that sees them heading for Lyme Regis to walk in the footsteps of John Fowles's *French Lieutenant's Woman* (a 1969 novel named for its Victorian-era heroine), and riding a steam train through Enid Blyton country. And on a boat trip along the spectacular Jurassic Coast, Clunes helpfully tries to distract Giedroyc from her seasickness by reading Thomas Hardy.

Britain by the Book with Mel Giedroyc and Martin Clunes

ITV1 / September



Mel Giedroyc and Martin Clunes are travel companions in a new show exploring Dorset's literary past

London's Museum of Brands is one of the institutions opening its doors free of charge for an annual heritage event



EVENT

Grand days out

Every September, a wealth of museums, stately homes and other historical venues across the UK open their doors to the public free of charge. Although the event is known by various names – Heritage Open Days in England, Doors Open Days in Scotland, Open Doors in Wales and European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland – each iteration is part of a wider European scheme.

Venues that have already announced their plans for this year's event – with the theme 'Creativity Unwrapped' – include the London Bus Museum, the National Holocaust Centre, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Museum of Brands. Last year, more than 5,000 places welcomed visitors gratis, so the final list of venues will certainly grow. See the relevant websites below for full details.

Heritage Open Days

Venues across the UK / September (dates vary) /
England: heritageopendays.org.uk; Scotland:
doorsopendays.org.uk; Wales: cadw.gov.wales;
Northern Ireland: communities-ni.gov.uk

HISTORY ON THE AIRWAVES

"I like arcane topics, as do our listeners – they entail quite a bit of swotting, which I always enjoy"



MELVYN BRAGG (left) reflects on the enduring success of his landmark Radio 4 series *In Our Time*, as it approaches its 1,000th episode



The Dalat Nuclear Research Institute in Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, the Americans feared that a nuclear reactor in the region could be weaponised

RADIO

Reacting to danger

How should you respond when the front line of a conflict reaches a nuclear power plant? In 1975, with North Vietnamese forces advancing on Saigon, the Americans had to decide what to do about a new breed of reactor that it had gifted to the South Vietnamese – and which was about to be overrun by the enemy.

As a new documentary recounts, an employee of the Atomic Energy Commission named Wally Hendrickson volunteered to remove fuel rods from the facility before it was taken. Increasing the sense of jeopardy that surrounded the mission, there was a fear that weapons-grade nuclear material could fall into enemy hands.

The Reluctant Nuclear Hero

BBC Radio 4 / Monday 4 September

Have you any reflections on the origins of *In Our Time*?

In Our Time began after I had been fired from *Start the Week*. When I was put in the House of Lords, the powers in charge of the BBC decided that a Labour peer could not introduce *Start the Week*. There were some comments about it being a political programme, which it certainly was not! But I had had a good run and didn't moan. After some protest in the press, James Boyle, then-controller of BBC Radio 4, offered me what was cheerfully known as 'the death slot': Thursday morning at nine o'clock.

I wanted to make programmes about scientists and biographers; about religion and, above all, about history – and to speak to academics. There were some stumbles of course, but then the programme found its length. Later, it became the first BBC podcast. The listening figures are strong and seem to be resilient. I am particularly pleased that so many under 35s listen.

Why do you think the programme has enjoyed such longevity?

Because of the quality of the academics who take part. They are almost without exception not only excellent, but chosen because they are also teaching academics. Again and again, I am astounded by the way in which they can be concise on quite complicated matters and cover what is often a wide terrain so thoroughly.

You're often dealing with quite arcane subjects. How difficult is it to research the shows?

I like all arcane subjects. So, it seems, does our audience! Our series producer draws up lists in the various categories that we touch on, and together we select a running order. It entails quite a bit of swotting on my part, but I always like that.

At the risk of asking you to choose between children, do you have favourite shows from down the years?

That's impossible! But I have been particularly keen on bringing in the history of China and India, and the medieval period in our history. The programmes on physics are a magnificent challenge. Scientists are extremely generous with their knowledge and help.

Can you tell us a little about the forthcoming 1,000th show?

In the present schedule, Einstein will be episode 999, followed by *The Seventh Seal* [a 1957 Swedish historical fantasy film from Ingmar Bergman, that's credited with helping popularise international arthouse cinema] as episode 1,000. I've written a book about the film and, when I went to university, seeing the Bergman films completely changed the way I saw and understood films. I found him as inspiring as any contemporary novelist. **H**

In Our Time returns on 14 September on BBC Radio 4. Access the full archive at BBC Sounds



A scene from *The Seventh Seal*, a 1957 film that helped popularise international arthouse cinema – and the focus of *In Our Time*'s 1,000th episode

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES



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RECIPE

Scottish macaroons

Scottish macaroons (or macaroon bars) might look like traditional teatime treats – yet their creamy white centres aren't fondant but sweetened mashed potato.

These desserts were reputedly invented in the 1930s by one John Justice Lees, a Scottish confectioner. According to myth, the fateful substitution of ingredient was a happy accident – though some say that his addition of mashed potato to the recipe was just one in a long series of culinary experiments Lees undertook in pursuit of the perfect filling.

Difficulty: 2/10

Time taken: 1 hour 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

120g cooled mashed potato (made without butter, milk, salt or pepper)
450–500g icing sugar
300g dark chocolate
140g desiccated coconut

METHOD

1. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Add half of the desiccated coconut to a frying pan and toast over a medium heat for about 5 minutes until golden brown. Mix with the remaining coconut and set aside.
2. Add the mashed potato to a mixing bowl. Stir in the icing sugar a little at a time until the mixture thickens and holds its shape.
3. Take a small handful of the



These chocolate and coconut desserts feature an unexpected filling

mixture and roll it into a ball. Place it on the baking tray and squash it into a flattened disc shape. Repeat with the remaining mixture, creating 18–22 macaroons. Put them into a freezer for 45 minutes.

4. Melt the chocolate in the microwave in 30-second bursts. Dip each chilled potato disc first into the melted chocolate and then into the desiccated coconut, ensuring that it is completely covered. Place each

coated macaroon back onto the baking tray.

5. Once all of the macaroons are coated in chocolate and coconut, return the tray to the freezer for 10 minutes until the chocolate is completely set. Store the macaroons in an airtight container in the fridge and eat within 7–10 days.

Adapted from a recipe at: scottishscr.com/scottish-macaroons-recipe



Amanda Holden plays Cleopatra – a figure whose sexualisation overshadowed her political acumen

TV

Long past bedtimes

Perhaps out of sheer embarrassment, we don't talk much about the history of sex. Step forward TV presenter and actor Amanda Holden and historian Dan Jones, whose new series runs through 2,500 years of life in the bedroom – and beyond.

In a series mixing archive footage and, ahem, dramatic reconstructions, there are plenty of serious points made, such as the way the sexualisation of Cleopatra has led to her

political achievements being undervalued. We're also promised strange desires from the Tudor era, and an exploration of ways in which the Victorians were surprisingly sexually enlightened. "Our generation knows nothing about sex compared with the debauched antics of our ancestors," Holden has said.

Sex: A Bonkers History

September / Sky History

PODCAST

Songs and laughter

As anyone who saw Tom Allen's turn as a football reporter for Sky can testify, the comedian has a particular genius for bringing a fresh perspective on subjects you wouldn't necessarily associate with him. All of which should make his *Monsters of Music* podcast – a kind of classical music-themed *You're Dead to Me* – unmissable.

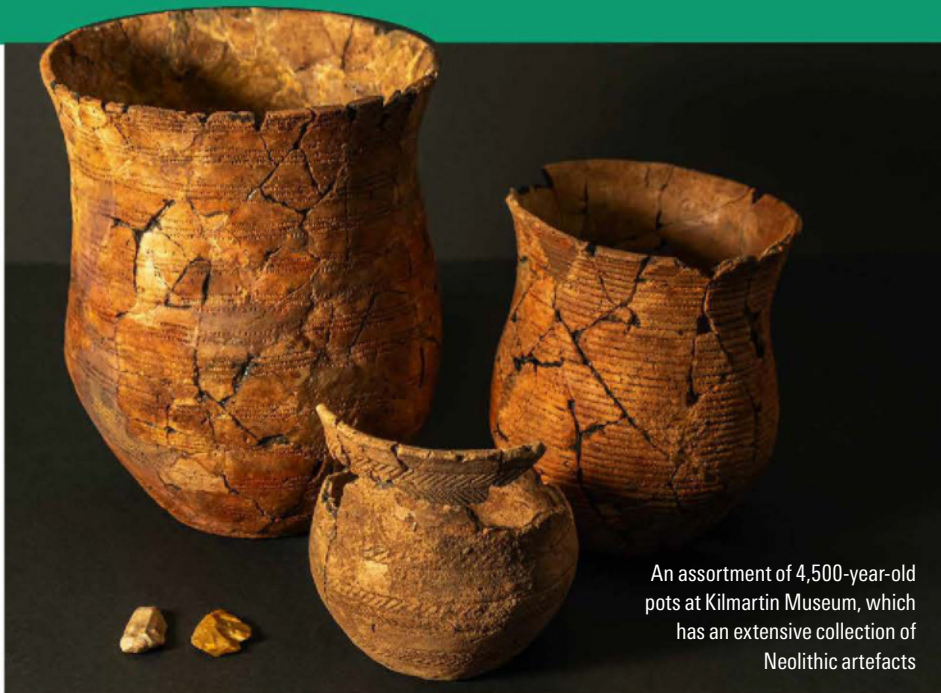
Each episode is devoted to one musician and features the insights of music expert Ben Gernon. The wild cards are the guests. Expect, among others, Jack Steadman (Bombay Bicycle Club) discussing Franz Liszt and fan culture; DJ Edith Bowman dissecting Anton Bruckner's fascination with dead bodies; and writer Frank Cottrell-Boyce's thoughts on Richard Wagner.

Monsters of Music with Tom Allen

BBC Sounds / Monday 4 September

Comedian Tom Allen and guests take an off-kilter look at the lives of some great composers in *Monsters of Music*





An assortment of 4,500-year-old pots at Kilmartin Museum, which has an extensive collection of Neolithic artefacts

MUSEUM

Object lessons

Kilmartin Museum in the south-western Scottish Highlands houses more than 22,000 prehistoric artefacts from Kilmartin Glen – the location of nationally important Neolithic and Bronze Age sites – and from across Argyll. Thousands of objects in its care have been awarded Nationally Significant status.

Closed for refurbishment for several years, the museum is set to reopen on 3 September. Together with substantially larger exhibition,

creative and educational spaces, it will feature two brand-new labs for the analysis and preservation of archaeological finds. Special displays for the reopening include Lizzie Rose's exhibition *Carbon Legacy*, plus works by four other local artists.

Kilmartin Museum

Kilmartin, Argyll & Bute / Reopens 3 September / kilmartin.org

PODCAST

Art of the question

Two decades ago, a theft in Scotland made international headlines. In August 2003, two men posing as visitors to Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfries and Galloway made off with *The Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, a painting dating from the early 16th century, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. At the time, it was valued at around £30m.

The painting was recovered four years later, and hangs in Edinburgh's Scottish National Gallery, where it's on long-term loan. But how did it come to be found? A fascinating new podcast presented by Olivia Graham – daughter of private investigator Robbie Graham, who played a key role in the story – sets out to explore that question.

The Missing Madonna

BBC Sounds / podcast available from late August



The 2003 theft of *The Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, made global headlines

TV

After the guns fell silent

In 1944 and 1945, with Germany in retreat, it became impossible for the Nazis to hide the full extent of their war crimes. Clearly, when the war was finally won by the Allies, there would need to be a reckoning – but how was the world to deal with those behind state-sponsored aggression and the barbarity of the Holocaust?

The latest instalment in *Rise of the Nazis* brings the story into the post-Second World War era. This new series deals with the trial of Nazi leaders at Nuremberg, the Cold War era and, latterly, the efforts of those who remained determined to bring Nazis to justice even as memories of the conflict faded. **H**

Rise of the Nazis: The Manhunt

BBC Two / September



Joachim von Ribbentrop is questioned during the Nuremberg trials. The fate of Germany's leaders is a focus of the latest instalment of *Rise of the Nazis*

» On page 35, Gerald Posner tells us about his hunt for the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele



A 16th-century portrait of a woman. Many of the beauty products used in the 1500s are still applied today

Renaissance beauty tips



From snail-slime face cream to poisonous makeup, our podcast editor **ELLIE CAWTHORNE** discusses a recent episode on creative 16th-century beauty regimes

Highlight your hair, pluck your eyebrows and slather on the anti-wrinkle cream. No, you haven't just accidentally stumbled across the advice page of a women's magazine. These beauty tips date back much further – to the 16th century, in fact.

Professor Jill Burke joined us on the podcast recently to delve into Renaissance beauty culture, and from golden waves and hairless legs to perfect skin and rosebud lips, it's striking how familiar some of the beauty standards of the time still sound today.

"There was a real obsession with women's looks in the 16th century, and beauty ideals were really narrow," says Burke. "You can see this in all sorts of historical sources, from the minute descriptions of women's bodies in poetry, to the paintings of Titian or Raphael. And this obsession with maintaining an alluring image wasn't just limited to the elites. 'Making a good marriage was crucial to poorer women's life chances. So the stakes were really high for how they looked.'"

Yet some Renaissance men feared the power of makeup, Burke told us. Stories circulated about ugly women tricking men into marriage by using cosmetics. One writer observed that, as you wouldn't marry a horse wearing ornaments, why

marry a woman wearing makeup?

Faced with the exacting standards of the day, women got creative in their quest for the perfect visage. Makeup was widely used to replicate and enhance natural looks, but that enhancement could come with a cost. Arsenic, lead and mercury were used in skin whitening creams, and even at the time these substances were known to be poisonous. "Renaissance women were well aware that if they used too much white lead paint on their faces they would get bad breath and their teeth might fall out," Burke told us. Less poisonous but similarly unappealing were cheap concoctions featuring ingredients like snail slime or pigeon droppings.

But not all beauty recipes were so dire – as Burke has discovered through personal experience. "Interestingly, a lot of the herbal products Renaissance women used are still employed in beauty products today, like chamomile or mallow. I've tested out recipes for perfumed 'face waters' (what we might call toner today) and my Renaissance anti-wrinkle cream has been a real hit." **H**



Listen now

You can hear this episode at historyextra.com/renaissance-beauty



THREE HISTORY EXTRA PODCASTS ON **THE HISTORY OF BEAUTY**



To beard or not to beard?

Whether it's styled into a handlebar moustache, left to grow into a long wiry beard, or clean shaven, men's facial

hair can tell us a lot. Back in 2021, Alun Withey appeared on our podcast to explore what grooming trends can reveal about changing ideas surrounding masculinity, hygiene and men's bodies. He also revealed why shaving was so tricky in the past, and how the failure to grow a beard could be a damaging social impediment.

historyextra.com/beard-pod



Style down the ages

How has the ideal body shape changed across history? Why did women in China bind their feet for centuries? And did

Georgian women really make fake eyebrows using mouse fur? As part of our Everything You Wanted to Know series, Lucy Jane Santos answered listener questions on the history of beauty culture – taking them on a whistle-stop journey from the kohl eyeliners of ancient Egypt to the "ideal height" for a 1920s flapper.

historyextra.com/beauty-qa



History told through hair

"Although some people say: 'Oh, this book is just about hair, and hair's really superficial,' those arguments betray

an ignorance of the wider historical picture." Back in 2019, historian and broadcaster Emma Dabiri joined us to discuss her book *Don't Touch My Hair*, which examines what the styling of Afro-textured hair can tell us about themes including colonialism, race, community and African cultures.

historyextra.com/black-hair

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The Viking shipyard

The natural beauty of this remote corner of Skye belies a surprisingly industrial past. **JAMES CRAWFORD** discovers a birdspotter's paradise that was once home to Norse warriors and their seagoing craft

The Rubh' an Dunain peninsula juts out like an arrowhead from the south-western corner of the Isle of Skye – narrowing from its base at the foot of the black and brooding Cuillin mountains to a sharp point that aims straight across the Sea of the Hebrides towards the Atlantic Ocean and America.

At its very tip, there is a hole, an enclosed circle of water known as Loch na h-Airde. Today, it is a lonely spot, only reachable by a four-mile walk along a beautiful coastal path, beginning on the beach at the southern end of Glen Brittle. Or at least, it's a lonely spot for humans – because wildlife abounds.

Golden eagles and sea eagles wheel in the vast skies above; golden plover stalk the tall grasses in search of berries or insects; shrews and otters make their homes in the rivers and the soil; and seals congregate in the calm waters of the inlet at the peninsula's end, where heaps of dark, volcanic rock have formed a natural breakwater.

It was not always quite so tranquil here, however. The remarkable story of Rubh' an Dunain really began to re-emerge just over 20 years ago, when a retired local doctor, David MacFadyen, came to walk the western shoreline of Loch na h-Airde and spotted an L-shape of wood sticking up from the silt. What he had seen was a crossbeam – a rib-shaped piece of solid oak used to connect floor timbers to a hull. Radiocarbon dating revealed that it was at least 1,000 years old,

and a fragment of a type of clinker known as a faering: a six-metre-long, four-oared vessel that originated in western Scandinavia. It was a Viking boat. Further study of the loch bed uncovered more timbers – all from boats built for navigating across seas and oceans. So what were they doing sunk in the mud of a shallow, inland loch?

The answer was found in a narrow, stone-lined channel, just over 100 metres long, that curves away from the loch to join up with the sea. Viewed at low tide, it looks like a dry stream bed, clogged with rocks and boulders. But as the tide changes, it fills up, flowing and pulsing with water. Soon it becomes obvious that the stones filling the channel have not been placed naturally. Rather, you are looking at the ruins of a canal.

Lochs and longships

Starting around a millennium ago, Viking boats began travelling up and down this canal. Marine archaeologists have now found the remains of an extensive, working settlement here – dry docks in the loch where boats were constructed or repaired, boat houses, store houses, living quarters, even a sluice gate in the canal to control water levels. For a time, this would have been a place of constant noise and activity – the clamour of construction, the sawing of wood and the hammering of nails. By widening and bolstering the loch's outflow channel, the Vikings had engineered the perfect harbour and shipyard.

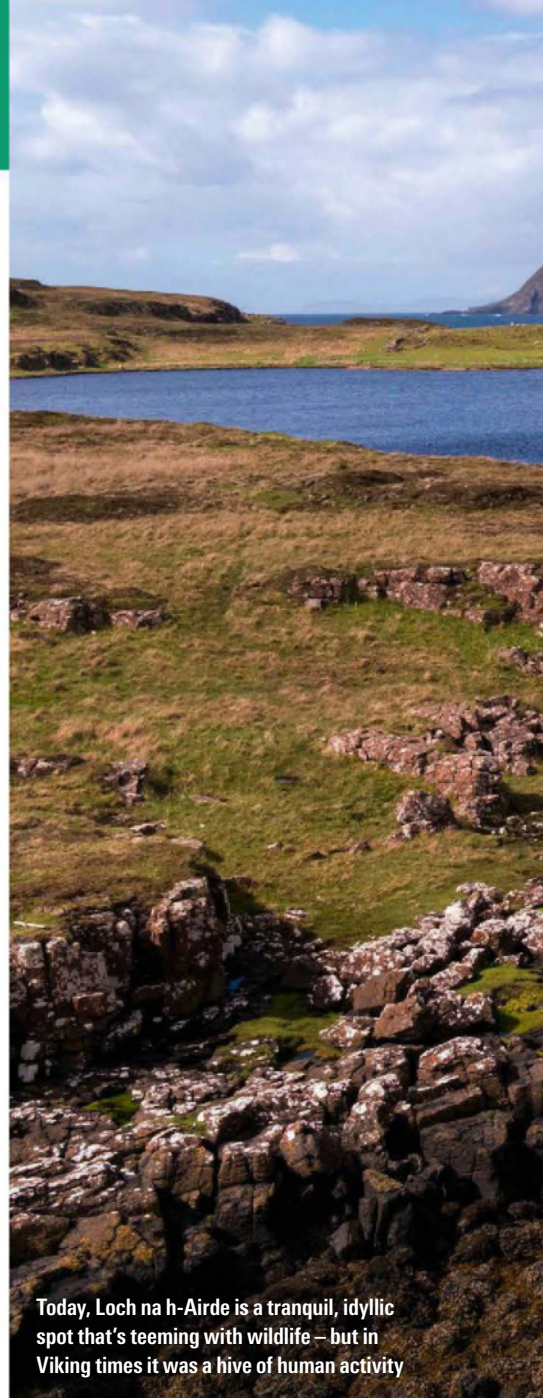
Today, most of the tangible remains of the Vikings' presence are lost or buried. Archaeologists uncovered the traces of quays and houses by excavating the banks of the loch. Yet the site's most striking feature – its thousand-year-old canal – still stands, strong and true: an ingenious adaptation of a natural landscape. **E**

James Crawford is a writer and BBC broadcaster. His new book, *Wild History: Journeys into Lost Scotland*, is out now, published by Birlinn Ltd

// By widening the loch's outflow channel, the Vikings had engineered the natural landscape to create the perfect harbour and shipyard //



For more information on Rubh' an Dunain, visit rubh-an-dunain.org.uk



Today, Loch na h-Airde is a tranquil, idyllic spot that's teeming with wildlife – but in Viking times it was a hive of human activity



A modern example of a faering, a type of boat that dates back more than 1,000 years but is still made today – mostly for use by fishermen in Norway



From above, Loch na h-Airde appears as a near-circular hole in the Rubh' an Dunain peninsula's western tip



A white-tailed sea eagle, one of several rare bird species that are native to Skye, catches a fish

Paris in five places

For more than 2,000 years, Paris has attracted royals, revolutionaries and artists.

COLIN JONES picks out five sites that highlight the city's rich heritage

1 Carrousel du Louvre Defensive discovery

Most visitors to Paris make a beeline for the Louvre, and rightly so: the palace houses one of the world's great art collections. But while you're there, consider a stop at a site that came to light far more recently. During the major renovation project at the Louvre in the 1980s and 90s, when the glass pyramid was installed, a shopping mall was built beneath it – the Carrousel du Louvre. And it was during these excavations that workers discovered the foundations of the walls built by King Charles V in the 14th century, during the Hundred Years' War with England, to bolster the existing fortifications.

The remnants, incorporated into the shopping centre, are massive, reminding us of the military aspect of this city, which needed to be defended from attack over many centuries. They also demonstrate just how small medieval Paris was – this bulwark marked the western boundary of the walled city.



1

The medieval walls that lie below the Louvre were rediscovered in the 1980s and 90s



3

Picpus Cemetery is the final resting place of many aristocrats – including those guillotined in 1794



2

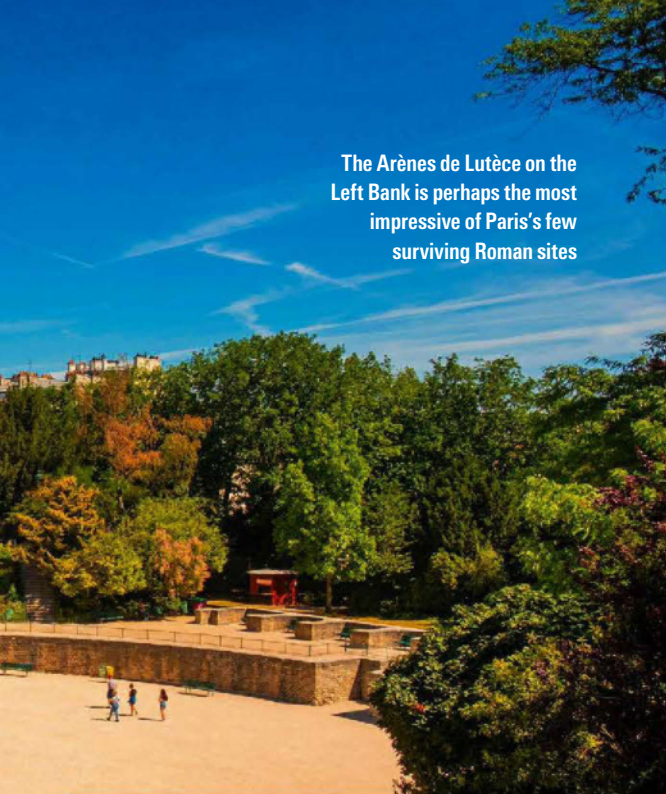
2 Picpus Cemetery Revolutionary resting place

In 1794, towards the end of the bloody period of the French Revolution known as 'the Terror', a plot of land seized from a convent was put to use as a cemetery. In early summer that year, the guillotine had been set up in the nearby Place de la Nation; dozens of people were being executed daily, and the bodies were piling up. So the revolutionaries dug big pits at Picpus, into which they threw the bodies – and severed heads – of 1,306 victims of the guillotine executed between 14 June and 27 July.

The corpses were covered with lime and, at the end of that frantic period of guillotining, the pits were filled in. Then, from the late 19th century, aristocrats acquired the land, which became a private cemetery in which only descendants of those guillotined could be interred, including many elite French families.

A visit to Picpus provides an extraordinary snapshot not just of the revolution, but also of French political life over the centuries that followed. You might find a memorial to an aristocrat executed in June 1794, then one to his descendant killed in the First World War, or one who was deported and died in a Nazi concentration camp.

The Arènes de Lutèce on the Left Bank is perhaps the most impressive of Paris's few surviving Roman sites



3 Arènes de Lutèce Rome in a day

Paris's sizeable Roman arena, the Arènes de Lutèce, was lost for centuries, rediscovered during construction of a tram depot in the 1860s, then excavated and restored in the 1880s and 90s. Only fragments of the actual structure remained, but the shape and extent was clear: a huge amphitheatre, more than 130 metres across, that could hold some 15,000 spectators for shows including animal fights and gladiatorial contests. It was built from the late first century AD, about 150 years after the Romans completed their conquest of Gaul and began to reconstruct the city they named Lutetia, on and around the Île de la Cité in the river Seine.

Today, the arena and the thermal baths that are now part of the nearby Cluny Museum are the only major monuments surviving from the Roman era. Stroll through a little covered passageway between shops on the Rue Monge, and you'll discover an oasis of calm.

4 Rue Saint-Honoré Paris à la mode

This street, running parallel to the Seine north of the Louvre, was the birthplace of consumerist culture – the place where the idea of 'fashion' and haute couture was created. It's where Rose Bertin, dressmaker to Marie-Antoinette, opened her shop in 1773, and many of the big fashion houses are still found here. But it's an ancient street, so you'll also come across several monuments to older times.

For example, you'll see a plaque commemorating Joan of Arc's attempt to capture Paris during the siege of the city in September 1429, when she was wounded by a crossbow bolt. A little farther down the road, just north of the Place de la Concorde, you'll find a plaque recording where the revolutionary leader Maximilien Robespierre lived between 1791 and 1794. So a stroll down the Rue Saint-Honoré reveals an interesting and reflective slice of Parisian life over the centuries.



Joan of Arc is depicted in this bas relief on the Rue Saint-Honoré



What was the Roman name for Paris?

Learn more about the history of Paris – ancient and modern – in our podcast: historyextra.com/greatest-cities



Place Saint-Sulpice is a good place to simply sit back, relax and watch the world go by



5 Place Saint-Sulpice The city in one square

In 1974, author Georges Perec wrote a short book – a pamphlet, really – titled *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien* (An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris). It was an account of what he saw while sitting in a cafe on the Place Saint-Sulpice, a large square on the Left Bank near the Jardin du Luxembourg. In many ways it's very basic: people board a bus, a man walks past with a plastic bag, pigeons take off, there's a bit of rain, and so on. But it reveals a sort of Paris without Paris – without the history, without the great sights and monuments, just letting the bustle be the spectacle.

Paris can feel very planned, thanks to Baron Haussmann's ambitious rebuilding project of the mid-19th century that created so many wide, straight boulevards. But when you visit, you feel as if you're making your own city. Sitting in the Café de la Mairie on the Place Saint-Sulpice, imagining yourself as Georges Perec watching the city go by, is a wonderfully satisfying way to experience Paris. While there, admire the impressive church of Saint-Sulpice, the capital's second-largest (after Notre-Dame), built over the course of more than a century from 1646. Its strikingly lofty interior features fonts made from the shells of a giant clam, and wonderful murals by Eugène Delacroix. **H**

Colin Jones is emeritus professor of history at Queen Mary University of London, and visiting professor at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Paris: Biography of a City* (Allen Lane, 2004). He was talking to the journalist **Paul Bloomfield**, host of our podcast series History's Greatest Cities

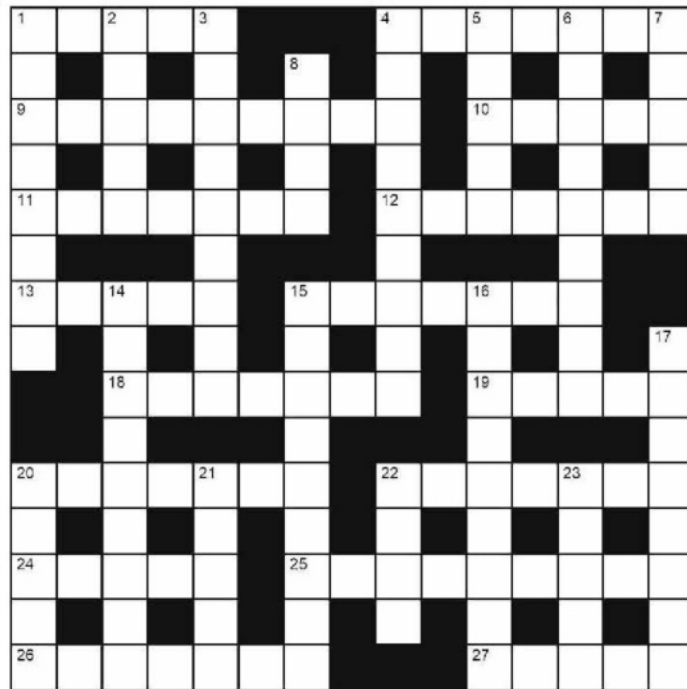
PRIZE CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Weapon, such as the Springfield named after the Massachusetts city (5)
 4 Town of central France, named after the Lemovices, a Gallic tribe (7)
 9 20th-century 'chanteuse' who began as a street singer in Paris, later achieving international fame (5,4)
 10 A colleague (later a rival) of Sir Richard Burton in the quest for the source of the Nile (5)
 11 Surname of chief curator at Historic Royal Palaces, historian and TV presenter who recently wrote on Agatha Christie (7)
 12 First Russian leader to be elected by popular vote (7)
 13 John ____, English lawyer who played a leading role in the trial of Charles I (5)
 15 Portuguese king whose sister, Catherine of Braganza, became Queen of England on marrying Charles II (5,2)
 18 Empire centred around Anatolia; it is now thought a major cause of its collapse around 1200 BC was a three-year period of drought (7)
 19 This island resisted the Ottoman empire's siege, May–September 1565 (5)
 20 US-supported opposition to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the 1980s (7)
 22 Pirate or privateer, particularly one of those active along the Barbary Coast (7)
 24 British artist whose vibrant optical pattern paintings have made her a leading exponent of Op Art (5)
 25 Massachusetts location of the opening shots of the American War of Independence (9)
 26 Supernatural practice, traditionally regarded as malevolent (7)
 27 Ellen ____, outstanding English stage performer, who had a "paper courtship" with George Bernard Shaw (5)

Down

- 1 Seventh-century king of East Anglia, member of the Wuffingas dynasty (8)
 2 A member of, eg, the mendicant order founded by St Dominic in 1216 (5)
 3 Sixth/seventh-century king of Kent (one spelling) who issued the first code of Anglo-Saxon laws known to exist (9)



- 4 French military leader who fought for the colonists in the American War of Independence (9)
 5 Iraqi city, noted for its Zangid dynasty (13th-century) metalwork (5)
 6 Jacobite forces, aided by the Spanish, were defeated here in the West Scottish Highlands in June 1719 (4,5)
 7 11th-century Danish king, ____ Estridsen, a rival of Harald Hardrada [alternative spelling] (5)
 8 A great Roman historian who encouraged future emperor Claudius to study history (4)
 14 The German industrialist who protected the Jewish workforce in his Czechoslovakian factory from the Nazis (9)
 15 Joseph ____, 18th-century clergyman and chemist who identified oxygen and other gases (9)
 16 One of the greatest European artists who continued to produce masterpieces despite his bankruptcy in 1656 (9)
 17 The Elizabethan Poor Law Acts dealt harshly with people pursuing this itinerant way of life (8)
 20 ____ the Great, ruler of Persia in the sixth century BC (5)
 21 Henry ____, a co-founder of a famous car manufacturing company (5)
 22 Empress Dowager ____, a powerful figure in Chinese affairs from the 1860s to the 1900s (4)
 23 Name of the wealthy US/British political family whose country house was Cliveden, Buckinghamshire (5)

Compiled by **Eddie James**



Book worth **£25** for 4 winners

How to Be a Renaissance Woman

By Jill Burke

This intriguing book delves into an aspect of Renaissance life that's seldom been touched upon – the emergence of a cosmetics industry and societal beauty norms – and examines how beauty routines can be both oppressive and liberating. It also includes recipes for making your own Renaissance cosmetics at home.

HOW TO ENTER

- Open to residents of the UK (& Channel Islands). Post entries to **BBC History Magazine, October 2023 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to **October2023@historycomps.co.uk** by 5pm on **27 September 2023**.
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Solution to our August 2023 crossword

Across 1 Crabbe 4 Almeida 9 Song 10 Isandlwana 11 Stilwell
 12 Ayrton 13 Browne 15 Kuwait 18 Shiloh 20 Reiver 22 Daimyo
 24 Gwen John 26 Bucharest 27 Tang 28/19 Bettany Hughes
 29 Dresden

Down 1 Crofters 2 Angel 3 Bridewell 5 Lydia 6 Edward III 7 Danton
 8 Mamluk 14 Wehrmacht 16 Worcester 17 Seahenge 21 Barbie
 23 Owain 25 Jutes

Two winners of 1964: Eyes of the Storm

F Matthew, Beckenham; DV Mansbridge, Hampshire

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

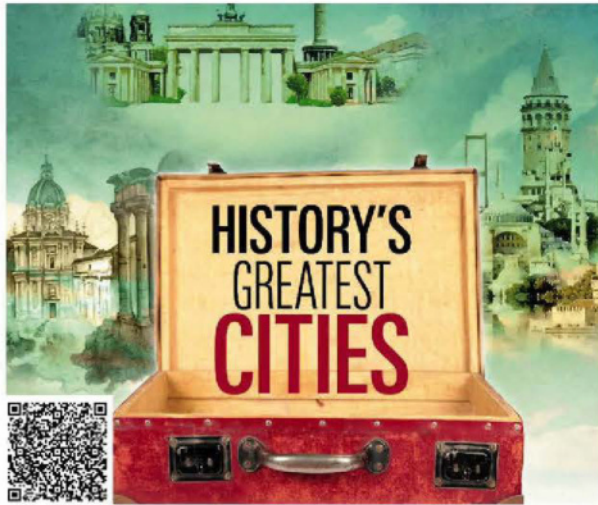
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Who effectively ruled China during the late 19th century?
 (22 down)



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What was Einstein's involvement in the bomb?

Albert Einstein is the man who got everybody thinking about the invisible energy locked away inside the atom, explains Professor Gareth Williams, as he details the scientist's influence on the development of nuclear weapons.

historyextra.com/einstein-bomb



6 things you need to know about King Arthur

The legend of King Arthur, a fifth-century warrior-king who supposedly led the fight against Saxon invaders, continues to fascinate today. But how much truth is there to the legends about the king, the Round Table, and the quest for the Holy Grail?

historyextra.com/arthur-facts



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James Holland offers a fresh view on one of the pivotal campaigns of the Second World War



French connection

John Guy and Julia Fox explore how Anne Boleyn's life and marriage were shaped by her years in the French courts

Ruling Rome

Mary Beard casts her eye over more than two centuries of Roman emperors



Behind the screens

As the magazine reaches its centenary, we examine the cultural history of *Radio Times*

MY HISTORY HERO

Children's Commissioner for England **Dame Rachel de Souza** chooses

Ignatius of Loyola

1491–1556



Dame Rachel is an educationalist and former head teacher. She was made a DBE in 2014 and became Children's Commissioner in 2021.



Ignatius of Loyola was a warrior in his youth, but later dedicated his life to teaching

IN PROFILE

Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish Catholic priest and theologian who co-founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) and became its first Superior General in 1541. After being injured in battle in his youth, he underwent a spiritual conversion and devoted his life to the church, missionary work and teaching. He was beatified after his death and later canonised. In 1922 he was declared the patron saint of spiritual retreats, soldiers and education.

After being hit by a cannonball, which shattered his right leg, he lay down his sword and embraced the Christian faith

When did you first hear about Ignatius?

I went to a Catholic school and as a little girl I had to recite St Ignatius's prayer. Later, as a student, I got a summer job teaching English to foreign Jesuit students and one of the things I taught them about was Ignatius. The more I learned about him, the more fascinated I became. He's been very influential in my life, though not necessarily in a religious way.

What kind of man was he? There were three Ignatiuses. As a young man he was a soldier, womaniser and rebel. After being hit by a cannonball, which shattered his right leg, he lay down his sword and embraced the Christian faith. But the man I really admire is the third Ignatius, the educationalist who reformed the Catholic church and sent out missionaries all over the world.

What made Ignatius a hero? He had terrible luck in his life – for instance, he was imprisoned for 42 days during the Spanish Inquisition – but he never gave up and would battle on until he achieved his objective, or persuaded the pope to his way of thinking about a particular issue: he called his approach “storming heaven”. It's that determination and ability to persuade, influence and get stuff done that I so admire.

What was his finest hour? For me, it was the moment when he decided to change his life. He walked to Montserrat in Spain, climbed the mountain, lay down his sword and dagger at the Virgin's altar at the Benedictine monastery, and vowed to devote his life to rebuilding the church. He then went to live in a cave by the banks of the river Cardoner where he prayed and meditated. It was here that he went through a spiritual experience, changing him as a person, which enabled him to do all the good work he later did as a Jesuit.

Is there anything that you don't particularly admire about him? I suspect that he may have been a bit of a nightmare to work with and I'm sure he was a hard taskmaster – but the good far outweighs the bad. However, I doubt we'd be sending out missionaries these days, would we?

Can you see any parallels between Ignatius's life and your own? Like him, my path hasn't been easy, and many of the things he said during his life have inspired me. Like him, I've also had to battle to get my ideas taken seriously.

What would you ask Ignatius if you could meet him? I'd ask him what we could do to ensure that the UK is the best place in the world to grow up. **H**

Rachel de Souza was talking to York Membership



In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxs8



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